

# THE FORUM GAZETTE

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## Militants Conflict in Sri Lanka: Implications for Accord

A.S. Narang

The bloody clash between Tamil Militant groups in Sri Lanka's eastern province has not only belied the hopes of persons concerned with peace that, after the Indo-Sri Lanka accord, normalcy would return to the Is-land but has also raised doubts about India's role and position with regard to these developments.

Till the time of writing this report Indian peace keeping forces had not intervened in the inter group clashes which had claimed over 90 lives. This may make the militant groups repudiate the accord which in any case they had accepted with reservations. Mr. V. Prabhakaran, the LTTE leader at the time of handing over the arms by his group had said that the militants were surrendering their arms only on a guarantee of Indian protection of Tamil lives against Sinhala reprisals and against revenge by other Tamils. With Tamils killing each other, what is the place of that guarantee?

According to available reports, the rival guerilla groups are engagd in a violent struggle for supremacy in view of the implementation of some of the clauses of the accord itself. The most important of these is the question of setting up an interim administration in the northern and eastern provinces untill these are merged with each other on the election of a single council at the end of the year.

### Struggle for Supremacy

The LTTE (the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam), the most powerful group has demanded that it be given the majority of seats on the interim committee and this body should have all the powers of a full fledged provincial council. In other words it wants control over the interim arrangements which can be used in its favour during elections.

Some other organisations like Peoples Liberation Organisation for Tamil Ealam (PLOTE), the Ealam People Revolutionary front (EPPRLF), and the Tamil Ealam Liberation Organisation (TELCO), have joined hands against LTTE.

The outbreak of clashes not only shows power struggle between the rival groups but also suggests that these groups have not surrendered a large part of their arms, which is a very important aspect of the implementation of the accord. This will not only provide excuses to the Sri Lanka government but more importantly provide a handle to the Sinhala detractors of the accord. This is particularly critical in view of the fact that the militant organisations, particularly the LTTE, have not accepted the accord in unequivocal terms.

### Reservations

The LTTE leader Mr. Prabhakaran, addressing a rally in Jaffna on August 4, had said, "India was over keen on striking an accord because it protected India's interests in the region". According to him its Tamil question was not central to accord nor were Tamils involved in it. He said he was accepting it on tactical considerations in the absence of any option, as an interim arrangement on the road to Ealam. Similarly another organisation EROS retreated its commitment to Ealam.

If Tamil acceptance of the accord is uncertain, the Sinhalas acceptance is more

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Symbolic handing over of Arms by Militants to Sri Lanka's Security Minister

## ONE UPMANSHIP IN PUNJAB

Never in the five hundred years long history of the Sikh panth have the people concerned seen the cavalier episodes like the ones witnessed in the 1980s. The latest in the series being the statement issued on 9th September 1987 by the four priests enjoining the Sikhs to back up the militants. Two of the four spokesmen having affiliation with the Damdami taksal may try to pass it off as the effort of a Moses guided by the pillar of cloud by the day and the column of fire at night leading the tribes out of captivity. In reality it remains a stroke of one-up-manship in the sordid power politics of Punjab.

### The Background

The Akalis were elected to power in 1977 but Smt. Indira Gandhi dismissed them in 1980. The Akalis were bitter because they hoped to rule for five years and in the neighbouring Haryana Bhajan Lal survived by the most ignoble trick i.e. collective floor-crossing to the Congress

(I) side. They succeeded in pulling down Darbara Singh government in 1983. In the process they drafted an entire new generation into power politics through questionable rhetoric. Their adversaries used more questionable methods to silence the Akali protest. The result was that entire Punjab went through hell-fire and the country lived through some tormenting years.

In 1985 efforts were made to put the institutions of representative democracy on the rails. The endeavour was, however, subverted by the niggardly follow up action by the same government which had attempted the restoration of democracy in Punjab.

After the erosion and subsequent dismissal of Barnala government another effort was made to consolidate the representative democratic side at the Akali level. The 4th August 1987 convention called by the acting Jathedar of Akal Takht Prof. Darshan Singh stands out as a mile-stone of progress in this direction. The convention voted out secession

of Sikhs from the Union and spoke for democratic struggle for the redressal of the remaining grievances. It resolved to struggle for a setup where the Sikhs could experience the glow of freedom within the union of India. In sum the convention brought the issues involved in Punjab agitation to the fora of Indian democracy and as an agenda on the negotiation table. In this regard the convention was an effort in continuation with the Rajiv-Longowal settlement of 1985. Both represented a bold resolve to put the events of 1984 firmly behind and look forward to a more constructive future for both India and the Panth.

All the four priests had participated in the convention of August 4. Singh Sahib Savinder Singh and Singh Sahib Jaswant Singh addressed the convention and deliberated about the issues on the agenda. The consensus arrived at the convention was evolved in their presence. None had dissented when the

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# WOMEN AND NATION-BUILDING IN INDIA

KIRAN SAXENA

Plato in his famous treatise 'Republic' had to admit the fact that women are not inferior to men and they have the same capabilities with which man is endowed. That is why in his ideal scheme of state, which he thought would be ruled by philosopher King, Plato had not excluded women from the highest status. Plato was not democratic and he was also not above the sexist bias (Plato did consider women as inferior in his other book 'Laws') he however, conceded the immense potentialities of women.

Whatever Plato had advocated, notwithstanding, the position of women in western countries was far from what it ought to have been. She remained confined, prisoner of the four walls of the house, a shadow of man, devoid of any personality of her own. She was a daughter of so and so; and wife of so and so; and not herself.

The position of women in India was no better than that of their counterpart in the western countries. True, in ancient India women might have enjoyed equal status with men but with the advance of time, their position began receding into the background. There has been much eulogisation of our past and there has been harping on the unique position of women in India. Examples of learned women as Apala, Gargi, Maitreyi and others are held out as instances of great achievement. However, in spite of our best efforts we can cite only few names. These were great women no doubt, and we should bow our heads in respect for their achievements as they had to struggle against the current. Is this not unfortunate that our Indian

society through out its long history has projected the ideal of Sita and Savitri and not of Gargi or Maitreyi who had a personality of their own and not mere extensions of the personality of their husbands.

#### National Movement

It is true that the national movement enlisted the cooperation of women. The national movement opened the door for women who participated in large numbers in the national struggle and faced repression, lathis and bullets, as bravely as their menfolk. The sacrifices they made were immense. The national leaders Gandhi, Nehru, Subhash and others were ardent supporters of women's equal rights. It was because of this that women in India did not have to fight for equal political rights as the women in the West had to do.

If the Indian women were given equal rights in the Indian Constitution the reason is not that the Indian Society had been more liberal than the Western Society. In fact, because our national movement had been influenced by the democratic movement in the West, and which had in its turn compelled it to grant equal rights to women. Besides, by the time India emerged as an independent nation world public opinion had already conceded equal rights to women at least in 'theory' if not in practice. Our political system has granted equal rights to women yet our leadership, in spite of having a liberal outlook, has been unable to evolve a straightforward and unambiguous framework for the role of women in nation building in free India.

The woman in democratic India is still chained with age old bond of tradition. Whatever rights are given to them in theory are negated by traditional set up of the society.

It was a great tragedy that national leadership was shy of fighting this traditionalism, which in independent India is emerging in a variety of forms called fundamentalism. The basic thrust of all fundamentalist ideologies is to protect the traditional structure denying women freedom and rights. This is true of all fundamentalist ideologies, Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. If one variety of fundamentalism is taking the cover of 'Shariat' to deprive women of economic security, the other variety of fundamentalism considers women only a property to be donated. The concept of 'Kanya Dan' is responsible for the tradition of 'Dahej' and bride burning which in its turn encourages the destruction of the female foetus by 'aminocentesis'. The birth of a female child is still considered a curse.

The capitalist system has been foisted over a backward economy in India. The traditional society has been oppressing the women with obsolete structures. The capitalist system has turned the women into a commodity saleable in a different way. The entire personality of women has been reduced to a physical entity. Advertisements, cinema and other mass media depict women as object of lust and a consumable article. The traditional society has weaved a web, encircling women inside the circle and she is not allowed to cross the circle. She was not allowed to venture out of this circle. The modern capitalist system has made women a tool of economic forces. The socio-economic structure which emerged as a consequence of modern industry within a capitalist system compelled women to come out from the four walls of the home. In order to make both ends meet she has

## SOUND AND FURY

If a pilot can become prime minister, why can't a film star?

Shatrughan Sinha in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*.

We do not interfere with freedom of Press, nor do we interfere with the functioning of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

Diplomats are mere file carriers.

Mr. A.P. Venkateswaran, the former Foreign Secretary.

They (Nobel and Bofors) have misled us so many times that we can no longer trust them unless they can prove what they say.

Mr. B. Oza, Indian Ambassador to Sweden.

There is no point in cleaning at Hardwar and Prayag when the filth begins from Gangotri.

Mr. V.P. Singh on corruption

Mr. Gandhi is a pilot and he needs a control tower. He does not have a mind of his own, he is always looking for directions.

Mr. Chandra Shekhar

Changing colour is not difficult for a man who sold paint for 20 years.

Sumit Mitra on Mr. Arun Nehru, in *Sunday*

Only sycophancy thrives in the party today. On the support of sycophants, the leader is hiding the truth.

Mr. Ram Dhan in *The Sunday Observer*.

I came to Madras from Rajasthan with just a *lota* and am prepared to go back with nothing more than a *lota*.

Ramnath Goenka quoted in *Sunday Observer*.

When you accept anybody as your general, you should also accept his order. It is not good when everybody starts commanding the general.

Prof. Darshan Singh, Jathedar Akal Takhat.

I am proud to be ex-President. It is a title nobody can take away from me.

Mr. Zail Singh

When he (Mr. V.P. Singh) is in M.P., Delhi or Haryana he will be with us, but when he comes to West Bengal he will be with the CPI (M)

Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Mr. Gandhi is a nice young man. In order to protect him from this horror of fascism, we should remove him from power.

Mr. Minoo Masani.

I am afraid the pre-Emergency scene is being re-enacted.

Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy.



to search a job, to eke out living for her family, but in a society where there is dearth of jobs, how can she get a job? Scores of studies on women's employment have shown that women's job is considered secondary to that of men. If she tries to get a job she becomes a competitor of men, and therefore she is looked down upon. Some how if she gets a job the problem to look after home exclusively a women's duty. The poor helpless woman is torn between these two worlds. Besides the economic forces of the capitalist system take advantage of woman's labour but do not protect her. The interest of the capitalist is to earn profit, and this profit is extracted from human labour. The society does not bother to provide her the conditions where she could play a constructive role so that she could have the fullest

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Managing Editor  
Amrik Singh

Editors  
G.S. Sandhu, A.S. Narang  
Circulation  
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## NEWSHOUND

YOU THINK THESE LARGE RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS MEAN MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE TURNING TO GOD?

I GUESS SO...

YA! OUR GOD CAN ORGANISE A BIGGER RALLY THAN YOUR GOD!!

By Rap



THE **FORUM** GAZETTE  
**The Misra Commission and After**

What would be Rajiv Gandhi best remembered for? It is a question worth asking. Those who feel gripped by the Bofors controversy would like to believe that it is this issue for which he would be remembered in history. Those who were smitten by his magic in early 1985 would like to believe that it was his spell of the 21st century which would be remembered best of all. In plain words, everyone's perception would differ.

In our opinion, whenever he would be recalled in history, it would be with reference to the circumstances in which he came to power. When he won a landslide victory at the end of 1984, people hailed him as a new prophet. Those who were critical said that a sense of fear had got created in the minds of people in regard to the future of the country and the vote for him was a vote for its unity and integrity. There may be something in each one of these explanations. But the question to ask is: how did he come to power?

It is difficult to answer this question precisely. But this much is clear that what happened within the first three days of his taking over as Prime Minister on an interim basis was a watershed in his career. Those three days of rioting in Delhi laid the seeds of his future power. So many things that he did after that flowed from that initial happening. Is it any wonder that for almost six months he would not hear of any enquiry into those riots.

Once the demand for an enquiry was conceded or, to put it differently, had to be conceded, the terms of reference were so framed that instead of it being the normal kind of enquiry into the causes and course of rioting, it turned out to be an enquiry into allegations made by its victims. Those who had been threatened and raped and killed were now required to prove that these things had really happened. The enquiry was a total sham and the report of the Misra Commission proved it beyond doubt. There was ample material available to convict the ruling party and the truth instead of being revealed was sought to be obscured.

As if that was not shocking enough two high-powered committees were appointed in pursuance of the report of that Commission. One was to look into the 'delinquencies' of the Delhi police about which the Misra Commission had commented and the second was to enquire into 'the grave offences' committed in the capital during the November, 1984, riots. These committees were appointed before the report was made public. On 23.8.1987 their term of appointment for six months expired. No new term has yet been given to them and there is no knowing what is going to happen. In any case they could not meet the deadline. For the first two months they were without any office and even on the date of their expiry they had yet to be given their "complement of investigative and administrative staff". Clearly these two committees were non-starters.

According to a news item published in the Times of India on 8.9.87—

Two of the committee members—Ms Kusum Lata Mittal of the police committee and Mr. Justice M.L. Jain of the other one—told this reporter that the response from the riot victims had been poor, probably because they were "too disappointed" at the Misra Commission's verdict and also because of the long lapse of time since the riots.

They said that some of the riot victims had actually visited the committee's office at Vikas Minar and told the members that they were not filing any affidavits as they had no hope of redress. The few affidavits that had come, Ms Mittal and Mr Jain said, were mostly in the nature of compensation claims even though such claims fall outside the jurisdiction of the committees.

What is one to make of such total disregard of judicial and propriety administrative integrity?

The plain fact is that, as noticed by almost every committee that had enquired into the November riots, these had been stage-managed by people connected with the ruling party. The more visible of them were denied seats to Parliament but there were so many others who not only sailed through but went on to occupy ministerial posts. Of hundreds of other criminals nothing was ever heard and hardly anyone has been hauled up for any office. None of these enquiries ever got to the bottom of things for had that happened these men of questionable reputation and shady conduct would have been put in the dock. This is precisely what the government did not want and that is how it goes on and on.

In this connection it may not be out of place to quote below another news item from the Times of India published under the column, 'In Brief' on 14.9.1987—

US to Apologise—Forty-five years after US troops rounded up thousands of Japanese Americans and forced them into World War II relocation camps, the US Congress is on the verge of issuing a formal apology to the survivors and offering the \$ 1.2 billion.

The move is to make amends for what a number of legislators this week described as "a deep stain on the US constitution and history".

Although the US justice department has opposed the legislation, some sponsors, including the two members of Congress who were held in the camps, today predicted that the measure will be passed by both houses next week by wide margins.

One lives in the hope that, one of these days, the Indian Parliament too will adopt a resolution condoning the death of those thousands of innocent people who were killed during those three fateful days. Only this will happen when Rajiv Gandhi has ceased to be the Prime Minister of India.

# Trusting the Terrorists?

(From our special correspondent)

**In the undivided Punjab, it was the duty of the State Government to hold elections to gurdwaras every five years. After the reorganisation of the State in 1966, it is the duty of the Centre to hold these elections. It held gurdwara elections in 1979 after a lapse of 14 years. As it does not believe in inner-party democracy, it probably thinks there is no need for democratic elections to gurdwaras.**

**T**he Punjab scene is getting gloomier and gloomier everyday, judging by newspaper reports which talk of "Punjab bleeding" or of "no light at the end of the tunnel" or of an "impasse in Punjab". Some even speak of how the "terrorists acquire helicopters and mortars".

Though these reports have been denied by the police, the media have underplayed the denials. Whether they are true or not is not the relevant point. None of the reports is based on any on-the-spot study.

There is much evidence of belief and make-believe. As is inevitable in such a situation, several doomsayers and soothsayers have sprung up among mediamen. The Cassandras, of course, see no light at the end of the tunnel. They agree with the present policy of the Central Government to wipe out the problem of terrorism first and initiate the political process later.

The refrain of the doomsayers is common. Unless the back of the terrorists is broken, talks with them will have dangerous repercussions for the nation. They agree that the fight against terrorism is painful and prolonged and the risk of further alienating the Sikh community is worth taking. Others say that talks with terrorists will be counter-productive and there should be no appeasement on questions of principles.

## Suggestions

**T**he soothsayers are of the view that all is not lost as yet and that the situation can still be saved if some corrective steps are taken. They want Chandigarh to be given to Punjab without any precondition and the release of the innocents lodged in Jodhpur jail. They bemoan their detention without trial for the last three years and feel that no democracy should be allowed such lawless action.

In this regard, they believe that the laudable efforts of Sunil Dutt, film star and MP, and Acharya Sushil Muni were halted by the hardliners at the Centre and the sudden introduction of the President's rule in Punjab. They say that the Acharya had almost hammered out a solution with the acting Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Darshan Singh Ragi, but it was sabotaged, to quote Acharya Muni, by "some persons" at the Centre.

These optimists want the Centre to strengthen the hands of Darshan Singh Ragi as he has come out openly against the demand for Khalistan and told the terrorists to resort to dialogue rather than bullets.

neither the intention nor the will to fight terrorism despite the fact that it belongs to the ruling party at the Centre and claims to be the upholder of secularism and democracy.

## Divided lot

**T**he Akalis too are divided into several groups, each having lost its mass base. It is indeed tragic that what is relevant in Sikh politics today is the terrorist, who is trying to play the double role of religious as well as political leadership. The BJP and the CPI (M) have their pockets of influence.

Some observers ask: Why blame the State Government and the State parties for the present mess in Punjab? The Centre cannot absolve itself of the responsibility as it has been directly involved in the mess up of the situation by attempting to gain narrow political margins by humbling the Akal Dal, its main contender for power in Punjab.

After all the observers point out, it was the Congress (I) which has been ruling the State since Independence. The Akalis ruled only for about five years and that too in alliance with the BJP. On their own strength, the Akalis formed a ministry only in September 1985 after signing the Punjab Accord with the Congress Government at the Centre.

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When office-bearers have been entrenched in the SGPC for 14 years mismanagement and corruption were bound to follow. Fresh elections were due in 1984, but they are being delayed for one reason or the other. The argument that elections could not be held because of terrorism is not valid as elections to the State Legislative Assembly were held in 1985 in the midst of terrorist violence worse than it had been a year before.

If the elections are held in a free and fair atmosphere, it will throw up persons whom the Sikh masses want. The risk is that terrorists might get elected. It is worth a risk taking. Once in power, a terrorist may well act with responsibility. At present he is enjoying power without responsibility.

**If the elections are held in a free and fair atmosphere, it will throw up persons whom the Sikh masses want. The risk is that terrorists might get elected. It is worth a risk taking. Once in power, a terrorist may well act with responsibility. At present he is enjoying power without responsibility. The terrorist will then have to work according to the Gurdwara Act of 1925, one of the laws of the country. It will be a step towards his joining the mainstream.**

# Militant's Conflict

Continued from page 1



Arms Surrendered by Tamil Militants

doubtful. This has already been established by various observations and events including attack on Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and explosions in Sri Lanka's Parliament. Earlier, to sell the accord among the Sinhalas the Sri Lankan government had also insisted that a Sinhalese should head the interim administration. It also, reportedly, suggested more administrative power for the governments agents in the districts of the north and the east, thereby consolidating the centres powers over the interim set up. The Tamil organisations were obviously opposed to these suggestions. They have not hidden their unhappiness over

the delay in setting up the interim administration.

## India's Role

Seen in this background which is already creating problems in the path of smooth implementation of the accord intra-Tamil clashes will only prove to be a stumbling block. How will India react to this? What instructions will be given to its peace keeping forces? It is particularly important in view of the LTTE's growing attempt to pit the Indian soldiers sent to Sri Lanka against the Tamils.

The militants conflicts are also preventing the north and

the east from settling down. As a result the Sri Lankan government has not been able to complete within the stipulated six weeks the settlement of the "residual matters" that the accord said should be resolved within that time. If the time-table is not kept and clashes continue, what will be the fate of the accord? And if as a result of non-implementation of the accord, particularly as a result of intra-Tamil clashes, militancy is resumed, what will be India's role when its army is there? Will it raise a question that how come two governments entered into an agreement over an internal conflict?

# One Upmanship

Continued from page 1

All the four priests had participated in the convention of August 4. Singh Sahib Savinder Singh and Singh Sahib Jaswant Singh addressed the convention and deliberated about the issues on the agenda. The consensus arrived at the convention was evolved in their presence. None had dissented when the consensus was announced by Prof. Darshan Singh to the house. By the norms of democratic functioning the four priests who issued the 9th September statement were a party to the decision of 4th August 1987.

consensus was announced by Prof. Darshan Singh to the house. By the norms of democratic functioning the four priests who issued the 9th September statement were a party to the decision of 4th August 1987.

## The Context

The context of the August convention had made the inspiration behind it very clear. The convention anticipated Akali unity and positive response by the central government towards the efforts of the convention. The days following the convention made the continuation of Akali disunity and negative stance of the central government evident

to all concerned. Prof. Darshan Singh had no choice but to retreat gracefully to his villa and kirtan. His withdrawal left a vacuum at Amritsar into which less responsible people were drawn by the force of circumstances. The agitated conditions through which Punjab and the Panth is passing abhor vacuum of any kind. This tristis vacuum however, should not lead us to conclude that the Panth can function in a vacuum for long. Ignorance of the world around and the milieu prevailing therein do good to no actor in history. The Sikhs as a people are part of a larger experiment i.e. Indian democracy. Any irresponsible move weakens the standing of the entire Panth in the Indian

all of a sudden. The latter is the source of many a hardship to the Akalis, the people and the militants.

## The Republican Panth

The tradition of the Sikhs as a people has been republican. Even a monarch like Ranjit Singh would not repudiate this republicanism openly. whosoever holds power holds it as a trust from the panth or the community or qum. The ultimate repository of power and legitimacy is this wide community spread around the globe. The priests are subordinate to this larger whole. When the community has representative institutions for articulating its social and political awareness it does not need priests to articulate itself. The assumption of spokesmanship over and above the community and against the community as well is a patent usurpation. Such usurpation cannot be sustained for long.

**The republican tradition of the panth is its strength. Republics can throw up the kind of leadership they need according to the circumstances.**

This tremendous resource need not be taken lightly nor it should be taken for a ride or high-jacked through privy statements. Only the entire community has the right to speak as the whole community. In no case can hand-picked priests speak for it.

In one sense the priests are keeping up an unhappy legacy left by political cirsumen like Tohra. In order to serve selfish ends such leaders first reduced the panth to an equivalent of the executive of the Akali Dal and later on to a committee of the priests when the former was

jailed. This expedient should not blind us to the fact that the guru-panth is a vast momement spread around the globe and living in all states of the union of India. Any representative articulation is bound to be wider than a bunch of nominated priests.

The Panth has had some grievances earlier. Now it faces the repression of the state. Punjab is denied democracy and young-men are being liquidated by the security forces. But the response to this onslaught cannot be shaped by the priests. It has to be apolitical and democratic response.

The 1985 elections in Punjab were a verdict for political settlement of the Punjab problem. It is a pity that it turned out to be still-born because of Akali squables and central callousness. Yet we should not ignore the fact that thirty lac of voters voted for the Akali legislators in 1985. Imagine one statement of the four priests declaring all of them 'irrelevant' and best suited for domestic chores only! What a strengthenig of democracy and democratic institutions?

In the larger Punjab sequence the statement by the four priests is not a development. It is confirmation and deepening of a divide in the ranks of the Panth. This divide will snatch from the panth whatever truncated potential it had to provide stability to Punjab and self-government to the Sikh population.

In Punjab peace is conditional upon the solidarity and unity of the Sikhs and their success in making the institutions of representative democracy work for the benefit of the entire population of Punjab.

**The republican tradition of the panth is its strength. Republics can throw up the kind of leadership they need according to the circumstances. This tremendous resource need not be taken lightly nor it should be taken for a ride or high-jacked through privy statements. Only the entire community has the right to speak as the whole community. In no case can hand-picked priests speak for it.**

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Window on Punjab

# FORCING THE ISSUE

Harcharan Bains

And Punjab where the country's experiment with freedom and democracy seems to have run aground, may yet pull not only itself but the whole country out of the darkling plain of violence, corruption and degradation on to a fresh dawn of heroism. The only things required are the ability to experience the acute guilt, shame and humiliation that our own actions have subjected us to and the willingness to transcend the affable cheat, incorrigible self-righteousness.

In Punjab, our past is beginning to catch up with us with a vengeance. The die is being cast and the grey areas are fast disappearing or are being made irrelevant. Those who till recently believed that they could take shelter behind equivocation are beginning to discover that the unyielding reality of the situation does not permit that luxury any longer.

It is a phase of history that will produce heroes and martyrs. Anybody who wants to be somebody will have to stand up and be counted. It is also a phase that will show the cowards up for what they are worth. The endless prattle about how the situation ought to be solved will cease for many of our spokesmen and oracles will find it discreet to keep shut and let the storm rage above their tops, literally.

The militants in Punjab have dared to achieve what the administration and the double-talking champions of national unity could not do. They have forced the issue. They have been categorical unlike most of our 'noble' heroes. The administration tells us day in and day out that the militants are on the run. Everyone living in Punjab knows who really is.

#### Vicious Crossfire

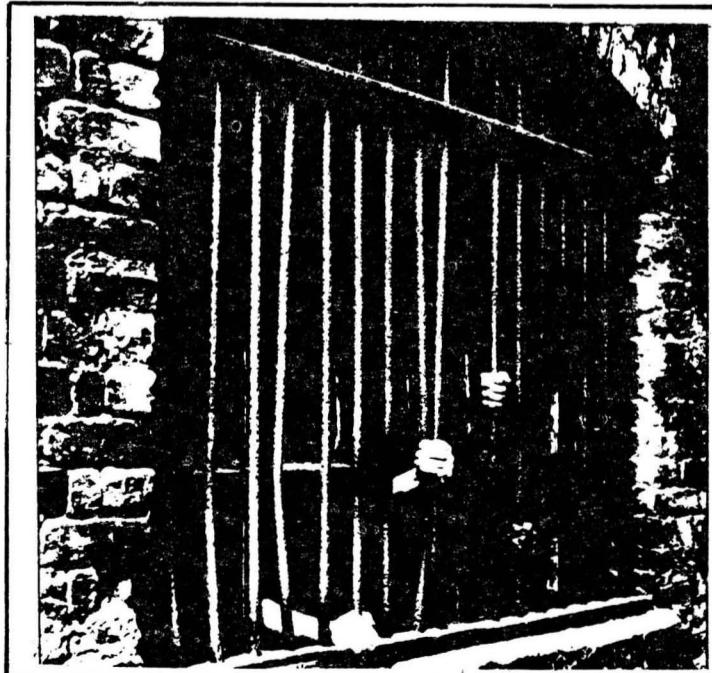
Let us examine the setting for this showdown. The relevant milieu at this hour are the Sikh masses. They are not with the militants. But neither are they with the administration. Even as the militants cock a snook at the administration by organising indiscriminate killing sprees within yards of police and CRPF pickets, the administration vents its ire by harassing, arresting and sometimes allegedly even killing innocent rural Sikhs. The common Sikh is caught in a vicious cross-fire between the militants and the police. Whoever wins, the price is going to be paid by the common Sikh.

Mr. Julio Ribiero, who may now have discovered the limits of passing the buck, is going to find things hotter and hotter because neither he nor anybody else in the administration has tried to befriend the terrain where the fight is raging. Besides, the ultras have outwitted him by completely bending the rules of the game.

It is not a conventional smuggler problem where getting two or three big wigs can clinch the issue. There are no big wigs amongst the ultras and the administration may have fooled itself and the country by preparing lists of categories of militants. The ultras have broken conventional patterns of working under a recognised leadership and a centralised command. This is the price the country is having to pay for Operation Bluestar. The administration is discovering that their rival is invisible.

And let no one be befooled

*And yet all is not lost. Not yet, that is. There is a silent mass in both the communities that is waiting for someone to give it a voice. Someone to stand up as a quiet glowing symbol, a figure of compassion walking the pathways of the Punjab countryside. Someone whose heart weeps at what Punjab and its people have done to themselves. Someone who replaces the gun with moral lyricism. Someone who would kiss every flaming forehead and heal every wounded bosom. Who is willing to die rather than kill for the state. What gives one hope is that almost every Punjabi, in his element, is capable of this visionary daring. Chances that he would fall to a terrorist bullet are as good as of his being killed in a fake police encounter. But chances of his succeeding against both are greater.*



In Punjab, as in the rest of the country, it is as if we have missed a note in our moral rhythm somewhere. What started off in 1947 as a song of cosmic harmony has been reduced in due course to crackling noises of greedy pygmies. In schools, we read about something called 'national character'. By the time we were in college, we knew that it is something that the Japanese have. Maybe, Bofors, Fairfax, terrorism, opportunism—all these have something to do with the commodity that cannot be imported from Japan.

their (i.e. the Centre's) own creations to further their goals. These boys were initially recruited to upset the electoral dynamics of Punjab in favour of the Congress(I). But the genie once out of the bottle simply refuses to go back into it.

#### The Hypocrisy

Now, this genie has seen through the hypocrisy of the system and appears all set to knock it off the base. Its principal weapon is the cynical opportunism of its opponent. It has discovered that the heroism, selfless ness and clean-livess of our national leaders is a Doordarshan sham that can be blasted in a moment.

**The nation cannot fight terrorism with Bofors in every sense of the expression. It has to set its house in order. You cannot fault the terrorist for looting several lakhs from a bank if you have stashed thousands of crores of dear**

**national money in Swiss banks. The terrorist is not responsible for the nation's thousand weaknesses; he has merely decided to exploit them. Till we plug the moral loopholes in our 'defence', we cannot save ourselves from the onslaught.**

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Here is an instance of how the nation is cynically befooled by its heroes. In Punjab, peace rallies, marches and conventions are held to 'mobilise public opinion against terrorism'. Each party that organises these circus shows jealously keeps the other parties out of it, lest the 'credit' for it be shared. And at each of these shows, the speeches made are merely relays of their election manifestoes, and a slander against other parties for having complicated the situation. The Congress(I) blames the Akalis, the Akalis blame the Centre, the Communists blame both and the B.J.P. all the rest.

And all of them have been pushed off the centre-stage by the sound of the gun.

#### The Intellectuals

**S**o have been the Punjabi intellectuals who have decided to don the robes of communal ventriloquists. The level of their intellectual honesty, brilliance and vision can best be summed up as obstreperous moralism. The Sikh intellectuals say 'do not kill the terrorist' because he is a Sikh. And the Hindu intellectuals declare 'kill the Sikh for he is a terrorist or his sympathiser'. Such, in its brutal nakedness, is the curse of history on Punjab. Needless to say, both these declarations are garbed in beautifully turned phrases justifying one or the other line of actions. One goes by the name of "political solution" while the other by "law and order." Punjab today is a hostage as much to the terrorists as to its intellectuals, many of whom use delectable semantic hypocrisy to convince themselves of their 'liberalism and secularism'. The nauseating violence of minds, that has dwarfed the intellectuals, has played even greater havoc with the social scene here than even the terrorists themselves.

And yet all is not lost. Not yet, that is. There is a silent mass in both the communities that is waiting for someone to give it a voice. Someone to stand up as a quiet glowing symbol, a figure of compassion walking the pathways of the Punjab countryside. Someone whose heart weeps at what Punjab and its people have done to themselves. Someone who replaces the gun with moral lyricism. Someone who would kiss every flaming forehead and heal every wounded bosom. Who is willing to die rather than kill for the state. What gives one hope is that almost every Punjabi, in his element, is capable of this visionary daring. Chances that he would fall to a terrorist bullet are as good as of his being killed in a fake police encounter. But chances of his succeeding against both are greater.

**And Punjab where the country's experiment with freedom and democracy seems to have run aground, may yet pull not only itself but the whole country out of the darkling plain of violence, corruption and degradation on to a fresh dawn of heroism. The only things required are the ability to experience the acute guilt, shame and humiliation that our own actions have subjected us to and the willingness to transcend the affable cheat, incorrigible self-righteousness.**



# President's Rule No Solution

Lt. Gen. J. S. Aurora (retd)

They say once bitten twice shy the Central Government has already been bitten twice but still persists with this effort. For the first time, you tried to solve the problem of Punjab in 1982-83 by fake encounters when the Congress was in power in Punjab. You only aggravated it. Then we had a dose of Presidential Rule which resulted in operation Blue Star followed by operation Woodrose which created a feeling of anger and revulsion in the whole community. Bhindranwale did not ask for Khalistan. His death has given his followers and others a handle for Khalistan to assuage their hurt feelings. Now, President's Rule has been imposed again and the result of the last three months are known to everyone.

For the first time, you tried to solve the problem of Punjab in 1982-83 by fake encounters when the Congress was in power in Punjab. You only aggravated it. Then we had a dose of Presidential Rule which resulted in operation Blue Star followed by operation Woodrose which created a feeling of anger and revulsion in the whole community. Bhindranwale did not ask for Khalistan. His death has given his followers and others a handle for Khalistan to assuage their hurt feelings. Now, President's Rule has been imposed again and the result of the last three months are known to everyone.

## The Lessons

More innocent people have been killed by terrorists and the State apparatus in the last three months than were killed in one year during the duly elected Akali Dal Government.

If there is one lesson to be learnt from this, it is that terrorism and certainly State terrorism does not pay. Accords do provide a solution provided they are implemented speedily and sincerely. In this dismal picture of Punjab, the only bright spot for a short spell was a period of Accord and the election and a short duration afterwards when the Akali Government was in power. At this stage, faith in the

If there is one lesson to be learnt from this, it is that terrorism and certainly State terrorism does not pay. Accords do provide a solution provided they are implemented speedily and sincerely. In this dismal picture of Punjab, the only bright spot for a short spell was a period of Accord and the election and a short duration afterwards when the Akali Government was in power. At this stage, faith in the Centre's sincerity had been reestablished. It got its first jolt on 26th January 1986 and disappeared in June 1986 after Venkataramiah's report.



S. Surjit Singh Barnala, Praised for efficiency and blamed for lack of political will at the same time.

Centre's sincerity had been reestablished. It got its first jolt on 26th January 1986 and disappeared in June 1986 after Venkataramiah's report.

Instead of doing an honest appraisal, the Centre decided to go in for suppression to eliminate terrorism to the total exclusion of any political initiative or consideration. I cannot say whether it is to their credit or misplaced confidence of the Punjab Government, who felt that once the law and order situation improves a little, political initiative will follow and they wholeheartedly cooperated with the Centre. But when a few fleeting opportunities for political initiative were offered, these were ignored and no initiative was taken and it was

not taken deliberately because by now, Haryana State Assembly election was looming large on the political horizon. It did not pay to take any political initiative in the Punjab. Naturally, no lasting improvement took place.

Jathedar Darshan Singh's effort at bringing about an understanding amongst the various Akali groups, in the month of February was successfully thwarted. The Chief Minister of Punjab was fulsounding praised in the Presidential Address to both Houses of Parliament on 28th February, 1987. For about six weeks, he was a beacon of secularism. Soon after, he became incompetent and finally dismissed on 11th May, 1987, again for the reasons of election in Haryana. I must say it was a remarkable rise and fall in less than 4½ months. Unfortunately, for the Centre, however, this political chicanery did not fool anybody, either the people of Punjab or Haryana where the Congress suffered a complete debacle. In thirty months a massive mandate had resulted in a massive defeat in Haryana. Reimposition of President's Rule in Punjab has angered and upset the people. They are no longer ready to cooperate.

## The Vacuum

The Central Government is working in a complete vacuum. Resentment is increasing day by day. Even though massive oppressive measures have been taken and the security forces have been given a completely free hand, the results are disappointing. As I said earlier on, there have been more people killed in the three months during Presidential rule than killed in the one year during the Akali State Government's rule. Jailing of thousands of young people and killing of the innocent cannot cause a change of heart and it can only embitter hearts.

I would like to mention something about the National Integration Meeting we recently had in Chandigarh under the Chairmanship of the Governor of Punjab. Representatives of all parties accepted that since the imposition of President's rule, the general situation had deteriorated and the credibility of the Central Government was at a low ebb. Various measures were considered, but none of

them satisfied the people present because they all felt that if we were to go to the people, "What are we going to tell them? What have we got for them? What have we got for them by way of water? What have we got for them by way of killing of the innocent and that goes for both the communities?"

## Political Problem

Let us accept that the problem of Punjab is political and it has been political from the beginning. It had been complicated from the beginning in order to gain electoral advantages by exciting and creating differences between the two communities, by creating fear complex against the Sikhs as being separatist and anti-national. Now, these aspects cannot promote a unified society and the people who are responsible for creation of these, to my mind, are the Central Government.

(Based on Speech in Rajya Sabha on 17 August 1987)

## Dithering on Nov. 84 Riots Continues

Government's attitude and casualness towards victims of November 1984 riots has once again been proved. Whatever it is doing is just a formal affair to provide a facade of legal process.

According to press reports the six month term of the two high-powered committees appointed in pursuance of the Misra Commission report expired a fortnight ago, with neither having gone much beyond the preliminary work of collecting affidavits from some of the riot victims.

These committees, appointed to inquire into the "delinquencies" of the Delhi police and "the grave offences" committed in the Capital during the November '84 riots, could not meet the deadline as they were without an office for the first two months and are in fact yet to be given their complement of investigative and administrative staff.

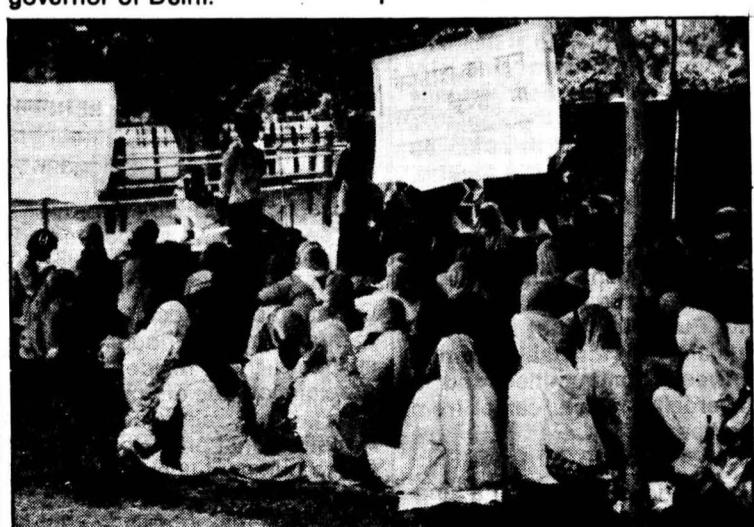
Interestingly, the government has not so far given them an extension either—which means they have technically ceased to be in existence on August 23. The decision on the extension has to be taken by the Union cabinet, which had appointed the committees through the Lt. Governor of Delhi.

A third committee appointed on the recommendation of the Misra Commission to ascertain the exact death toll of the riots following Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination had completed its task in May.

On the basis of a public notice inviting claims of death, this committee, under the home secretary of the Delhi administration, estimated that about 2,700 people had been killed during the riots in Delhi alone, according to sources.

Though the appointment orders of the committees, meant to look into the police conduct and monitor the investigation of various offences, clearly state that they would be authorised to ask for any related document to take the necessary action, the government has allowed them only to see the Misra Commission records and not to use the same as *prima facie* evidence for the purpose of their investigation.

The committees have written to the government to permit them to use the Misra Commission records as *prima facie* evidence as they have been able to get on their own no more than about 300 affidavits each.



# Punjab—maze inside a puzzle

By M. N. Buch

**The obsession with violence in the Punjab—admittedly a serious problem—has not been viewed in the overall context of violence all across the country. Even Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have a higher number of violent deaths than the Punjab. As for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, their figures for violent deaths make Punjab seem a playground. Yet, nobody, after a land lord-executed massacre in Bihar, would dare speak of "Thakur terrorism."**

**W**hen the Sikhs opted for a second war with the British or, if one so prefers, the British did so with the Sikhs, for Dalhousie the options were quite clear. As he put it, "Unwarned by precedent, uninfluenced by example, the Sikh nation has called for war and on my word, Sirs, they shall have it with a vengeance." Thereafter, in a series of battles culminating in Gujarat, Dalhousie proceeded to shatter the Sikh armies, annex Punjab and bring it under the firm, paternalistic rule of the Punjab Commission. Of all the provinces of British India Punjab received perhaps the best of British rule, with energetic officers, the world's greatest perennial irrigation system and as fine a network of roads as could be found in the country. The motive was certainly not altruistic, for in a prosperous Punjab the British Empire found its strong sword-arm, which served it well in the War of 1857, all the little imperial wars in Afghanistan, Africa, China etc., and the two World Wars.

**A prosperous Punjab served both India and Pakistan well. The green revolution is, almost single-handed, the gift of Punjab (one includes Haryana in the generic term, Punjab). Wherever Indian arms have stood in the defence of the country Punjab has been in the forefront. It is the Sikh Regiment which, in the North-East, stopped the Chinese dead in Walong, the only such victory in that sector in 1962. In 1965 the then Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Arjun Singh, personally led sorties against Sargodah, till Lal Bahadur Shastri grounded him as he did not want him placed at risk. The whole of the light industry sector in India has virtually been a creation of the Punjabis, who have also contributed so significantly to art, theatre, music, architecture, medicine, the legal profession and the Administrative Services. Much of the wealth of Delhi and northern India is a creation of the Punjabis. What is more, Punjab stood for stability, amity between communities and a generosity which came from the heart.**

## Violence and death

**S**uddenly Punjab is a land where terror stalks and the cosmic dance of

do? Screw down hard on the people of Punjab? One brief spell of authoritarian army-backed rule during and after Operation Woodrose has made the Army an object of dislike amongst the Sikhs in many parts of Punjab. If the Army restores peace as Balban did in Haryana, by "exterminating the population", which means bringing it under the counterterror of a superior force, would peace last? One suspects even greater alienation of the people.

This is not to decry police/army measures. In fact, what is needed is more efficient intelligence, better penetration of terrorist groups and thereby their physical liquidation and the creation of an environment in which it is expensive to bear arms against the State. We need a drastic amendment of the Arms Act, to make the possession of an unlicensed weapon liable to a mandatory death penalty. A few people hung through due process of law, in Bihar as much as in Punjab, would probably act as a greater deterrent than a thousand killed in so-called encounters. This is not a plea for blood thirstiness. The weapons now available to terrorists are a leading factor in keeping terrorism alive and draconian laws which cause drying up of the source of weapon supply are as important as the law prescribing harsh penalties for drug abuse. The more law breakers that are brought to book by due process of law the sooner will respect for law be restored in India.

But for a police option or, for that matter, the Army option, to succeed there has to be a political frame within which the administration must function. Public declarations that Government will not rest till terrorism is crushed are not a political frame or policy. The

Prime Minister can hardly announce in public that Government will surrender to terrorism. Dalhousie's declaration of war was a political statement and the events which followed fitted into the frame of that statement, including annexation of and direct British rule in Punjab, as what came to be known as a non-regulation province. Unfortunately the political options which the Government is considering in Punjab are a total mystery to all of us.

**F**irst and foremost there must be a declaration of whether or not there will be a declaration of whether or not there will be a democratic political process in Punjab and, if so, who will be the participants. Obviously it cannot be the Congress and the Akali (Longowal) Dal alone. Do the militants figure in the process? Government must publicly state its stand in this behalf. If the militants are out, then they become enemies, to be treated as such, with all the rigours of war. As a natural corollary, there must be a further declaration that Punjab will be ruled, virtually as a non-regulation province, till terrorism ends or till infinity, whichever is earlier. At present there is no unequivocal political message that if terrorism will not wither away nor will the Indian State.

## Sense of injustice

**E**ven if the option is direct rule, there still has to be an effort at reconciliation and reversal of the process of alienation. Even the worst of dictators attempts this because he knows that without collaborators his regime cannot survive. Punjab is not an occupied territory and the youth must be won back. What does Government intend to do to remedy the present manifest sense of injustice which seems to plague the Sikhs? What steps will Government take to restore the faith of the Sikhs in Government as an instrument of governance rather than of terror? The Prime Minister and Mr. S. S. Ray will have to apply their minds to the finding of answers. If they have already done so, the people would like to share their knowledge so that they can help in the process of normalisation.

Perhaps the best course in

**A prosperous Punjab served both India and Pakistan well. The green revolution is, almost single-handed, the gift of Punjab (one includes Haryana in the generic term, Punjab). Wherever Indian arms have stood in the defence of the country Punjab has been in the forefront. It is the Sikh Regiment which, in the North-East, stopped the Chinese dead in Walong, the only such victory in that sector in 1962. In 1965 the then Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Arjun Singh, personally led sorties against Sargodah, till Lal Bahadur Shastri grounded him as he did not want him placed at risk. The whole of the light industry sector in India has virtually been a creation of the Punjabis, who have also contributed so significantly to art, theatre, music, architecture, medicine, the legal profession and the Administrative Services. Much of the wealth of Delhi and northern India is a creation of the Punjabis. What is more, Punjab stood for stability, amity between communities and a generosity which came from the heart.**



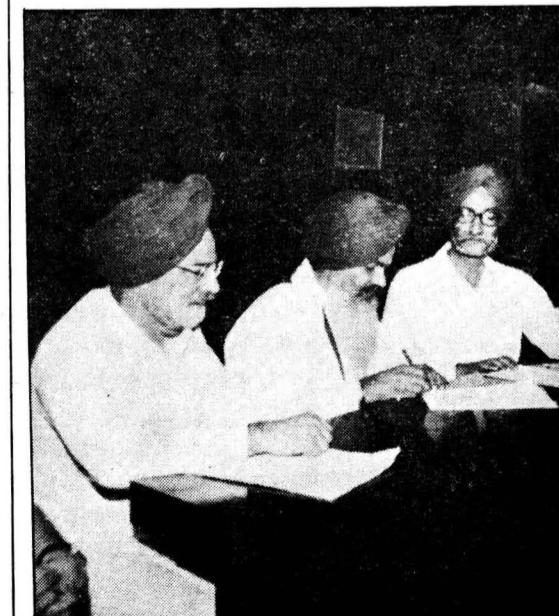
Are these protests n

## PUNJAB : C PERCEP'

*During the last few months in Punjab have been changing. There is rethinking on the part of the people. Now coming around to the policies are not likely to succeed.*

*Whatever be the true changing as the following indicate. One by P. Sainath. This paper has been a mirror to the Sikhs as any one could see. The paper is now talking in a different language.*

*The other article by M.N. Buch who has chosen to take a break from the IAS. Currently he is working with the Urban Commission appointed by the Government of India.*



Accords do provide a situation pro



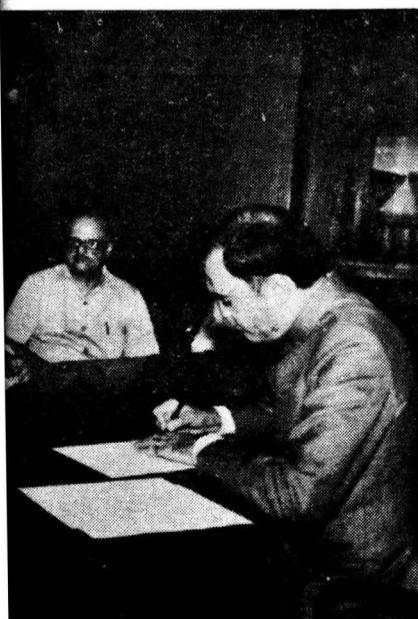
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## HANGING TIONS

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Such is by some one remature retirement Vice Chairman of the d by the Government



ed they are implemented

Punjab would be to make the following declarations:

(1) Punjab will be governed, firmly but fairly, by the Centre till the normal political process is restored.

(2) Punjab is another State of the Union and, in a secular polity, no special status will be given to it as the homeland of a particular religious community. Religious identity is not the same as linguistic identity and India will not tolerate the politics of theocracy.

(3) The neglect, in the field of medium and heavy industry, of Punjab because it is a border State will be remedied urgently.

(4) The administration will be drastically overhauled. If the police has to be disbanded and reconstituted from scratch, so be it.

### Correcting the wrongs

(5) All Sikh grievances will be considered dispassionately, including the Jodhpur detenus, reparations for Operation Bluestar, the Delhi riots etc. All wrongs will be righted, not because the State is weak, but because it is just.

(6) There will be rule of law and not rule of the gun. If, in order to bring offenders to book, the laws of evidence and trial, as also the penalties, have to be temporarily amended,

that will be done. But it is the majesty of law which will punish, not the itchy trigger finger of a policeman under pressure.

(7) In the context of modern India and with democratic modifications the rule of the Punjab Commission will be restored, with the District Officer being not only made the pivot, but with the best in the Service being selected and then cloaked with plenipotentiary powers. Their mandate would not be so much to hunt terrorists as to win over the people, as did Nicholson in Multan and Edwardes in Bannu for the British and Rustamji in the North-East and Noronha in Bastar for India.

(8) The Prime Minister will, even at personal risk, make Punjab an area of his own concern. He will tour Punjab, meet people and create a focus of loyalty and hope. In the ultimate analysis it is the Ranjit Singhs, Dalhousies, Sikandar Hayats, Mohandas Gandhis, Patels and Nehrus of this world, who can make the grand gestures which win over a whole people. The Rays, Ribeiros and Sundarjis can only be the instruments of policy and not its makers.

(Courtesy Indian Express)

# WORDS AS WEAPONS

## Stop smearing the Sikhs

P. SAINATH

A lot of people seem to have forgotten that Sant Longowal was a Sikh: one who gave his life for an accord which he hoped would keep India united and bring peace back to the Punjab. That this accord remains a piece of paper today is no fault of the Sikhs either.

**O**n successive days last month", says the latest issue of *Newsweek*, "Sikh terrorists (emphasis mine) stopped two buses in Haryana. *Newsweek* goes on to assert that to far this year, more than 700 people have been killed as a result of "Sikh terrorism" (Aug. 24, 1987, page 18).

*India Today* was off the mark much earlier. In its issue dated July 31, it speaks about how the Haryana massacres suddenly brought "Sikh terrorism" into infinitely closer focus (page 30). The "national" dailies were, of course, the very first to pass sentence on "Sikh terrorism" immediately after the

From suggesting that extremism in the Punjab is the product of one community to suggesting that every member of that community is a terrorist is a small step. A step that some of the more communal publications have already taken. The tragedy is that

several of the more responsible and well-meaning publications also use the term "Sikh terrorists" which tars an entire community. Perhaps the majority of these do so inadvertently.

### MOST VICTIMS SIKHS

**C**an you imagine the outcry if, writing of the orgies of violence in Meerut, one were to speak of "Hindu terrorists"? We would never hear the end of it. If Hindus as a community cannot be thus labelled, how is it possible in the case of the Sikhs? Even a part from the argument of fairness and even-handed treatment, cold facts are against the content of the term "Sikh terrorists".

The most revealing of these facts is the death toll of political activists who have fallen to terrorist bullets over the last two years. There are hardly any from the chauvinist Hindu organisations that make mighty

displays of militancy about the Punjab in the safer states of the republic, but whose leaders within the Punjab have developed a passion for life indoors.

The brunt of the terrorist onslaught on political activists, as Punjab Police supremo Julio Ribeiro admits, has been borne by the two Communist parties. Ribeiro, who can hardly be described as a Left-leaning radical, even commended the spirit shown by CPI and CPI(M) activists in standing up to the terrorists.

The two parties between them have lost 41 members to terrorist bullets—32 CPI and nine CPI(M). Both parties assure us, besides, that these are incomplete figures, as there are also a few mysterious "disappearances" which, they surmise, can only mean that the missing members have been abducted and killed.

Of these 41 fallen political activists, 25—that is, over 60%—are Sikhs. Surely that means something significant? Who then, is taking on the terrorists—the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha? The two Communist parties have lost some of their finest cadres in this fashion. And the overwhelming majority of those cadres have been Sikhs.

### LET FACTS SPEAK

**I**f we narrow down the field to leadership level activists, the percentage of Sikhs amongst them goes up to almost 80%. In fact, at the top leadership level, almost all are Sikhs. Darshan Singh Canadian, former state secretary of the CPI and among those gunned down by the terrorists, was a Sikh. So was Dr. Gurdial Singh Mathada, of the CPI(M), a vice president of the Kisan Sabha, who met a similar fate.

The CPI, which has suffered very heavily in terms of both deaths and injuries inflicted on its cadres in terrorist attacks, has also lost Arjan Singh Mastana (state party executive member), Sukhminder Singh (Faridkot district committee secretary), Sumit Singh (Editor, *Preet Ladi*), Jagir Singh (Khet Majdoor Union leader) and so on.

Apart from being CPI members and party leaders, all of them had another thing in common. They were all Sikhs. Chanan Singh Doot of the CPI(M)—a state committee member—was also a Sikh. So were other leading victims from his party, such as Gurnam Singh Uppal (president of the Democratic Youth Federation of India).

The point is very simple: in the light of this evidence does the term "Sikh terrorist" not sound ridiculous? It is a communal term with highly dangerous connotations and certainly contributes in no small measure to the sense of alienation that has gripped sections of the Sikhs. The sacrifices of this community in four wars this nation has suffered stands reduced to nought—though, when those sacrifices were made, we were proud to claim them as Indian heroes. The dubious "evidence" of the past few years, greatly reinforced by a

barrage of media epithets on "Sikh terrorism" have helped ensure unhealthy stereotypes to dominate the popular view.

A lot of people seem to have forgotten that Sant Longowal was a Sikh: one who gave his life for an accord which he hoped would keep India united and bring peace back to the Punjab. That this accord remains a piece of paper today is no fault of the Sikhs either.

### DROP THE TERM

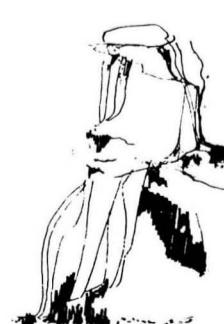
**E**ven apart from the death toll among political party activists, a survey of the ordinary victims of terrorists would also show that Sikhs have in no way been spared. Of the 16 people murdered in Punjab this last week, 13 have been Sikhs. And they include seven close relatives of Union Home Minister Sardar Buta Singh. In the first three months of 1987, terrorists murdered 168 persons, of whom 96 were Sikhs.

The obsession with violence in the Punjab—admittedly a serious problem—has not been viewed in the overall context of violence all across the country. Even Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have a higher number of violent deaths than the Punjab. As for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, their figures for violent deaths make Punjab seem a playground. Yet, nobody, after a land lord-executed massacre in Bihar, would dare speak of "Thakur terrorism".

It is, therefore, humiliating and highly communal to employ the term "Sikh terrorism" to describe the phenomenon of extremism that we are witnessing in the Punjab. It would be far more correct to describe the murderers of Lalru and Fatehabad as so-called "Khalistani terrorists" or to speak of "extremism in the Punjab".

If the Press Council and the Editors Guild are ever to make themselves useful in practice—highly improbable, I grant you, but we can hope, can't we?—then they ought to take up the issue of an entire community being labelled day in day out in virtually every publication in the nation.

Surely, these bodies can use any influence they possess to issue guidelines on how to tackle this problem? A few publications have, indeed, begun acting on their own. Barring the occasional slip-up, the News Editor of this journal, C.C. Trikannad, weeds out "Sikh terrorism" each time he comes across it in an item. But coming from a body of editors it would, hopefully, have more impact on a wider scale. At least, to begin with, on the publications run by the editors who are members of the guild—which never seem to tire of pontificating about "Sikh terrorism".



# THE POSSESSED

Swinder Singh Uppal

**M**aster Chamanlal could never say for certain whether it had been wise or foolish of him to have built a house in this posh colony. Selling his village house and land in 1953-54, he had purchased this 500 square yard plot partly out of his savings but mainly with the help of a house building loan from the government. He built the house after two years. To have his own house had become his primary need as he was sure of spending the rest of his life in Delhi. At that time there were very few houses in this colony. Being short of hard cash, it was not very easy to build up the whole plot. Chamanlal had left a large open space in front which he converted into a lawn with flower-beds on two sides and two beds for kitchen gardening on the third side. His daily vegetable requirement was met through this kitchen garden.

Master Chamanlal lived in the two room ground floor set with his family while the first floor two room set was let out on rent. He was glad to have a house in this colony as real estate and rental values were fast appreciating, and he could count himself well-off.

And yet his satisfaction was marred by a feeling of regret. All around were the bungalows of the rich, leading a vulgarly luxurious life. Master Chamanlal often felt an impotent rage when he looked at these parasites having the best of everything while he himself had to struggle to keep the pot boiling. But at school he never spared a defaulting rich boy. His flogging was proverbial. He constantly guarded himself from falling a prey to the inferiority complex which threatened his life.

"We are not beggars. We earn our bread with hard work and never seek favours from these haughty neighbours. In fact they have reason to be grateful to us for being a help to them in many ways, such as finding a tutor for their kids or getting their children admitted to school." And yet he was never fully freed from a deep-seated resentment against the insensitive, haughty rich whose presence all around choked him. His son and daughter felt constantly humiliated and looked down upon by the children of the rich, or when they found themselves deprived of what was within easy reach of the spoilt brats of the rich.

Master Chamanlal tried to instil among his children a sense of pride by giving them a taste for books. He also thought of awakening their sense of beauty. In this endeavour he found peace for himself as well. The rage which he always found boiling within him and which he did not always curb from erupting into a violent act without the strongest act of will, began to subside as Master Chamanlal devoted himself more and more towards finding ways of giving a sense of purpose and love of beauty to his children. He allotted a bed of flowers each to his son and daughter and gave them a spirit

of healthy competition. He would himself guide and encourage them and the whole family spent a couple of happy hours every evening in their small sweet scented garden.

Their small garden was a spot of beauty and an object of envy for all around. At the same time Master Chamanlal had now to protect his tender plants and flowers from poachers. A plucked flower or a plundered fruit tree made him fly into an anger which could not be spent on any target as Master Chamanlal never succeeded in catching anybody red handed.

Many a time Master Chamanlal thought of selling the house and going to a more middle class colony. But his lovely lawn, these fruit bearing trees, the silken, scented flowers never let him make up his mind to do that. In fact he reacted sharply to a relative's suggestion when asked to build a couple of sets in the front and increase his income by renting them out. "I am a poor man, but not avaricious. Please do not talk of spoiling my garden. I don't like it at all." When his wife asked him to spare more space for growing vegetables, Master Chamanlal almost hit her. He could never imagine anybody interfering with his dear garden. He made such efforts for improving it, visiting nurseries, seeking advice at agricultural institutes, using all kinds of manure.

One day in the newspaper, Master Chamanlal read that a flower show organisation was arranging a rose exhibition where prizes were to be given for the best rose and for roses in

a long time before they could be full plants in bloom. The date of the exhibition was drawing near. Master Chamanlal was eager, expectant and impatient. But flowers take their time. Master Chamanlal decided to go to the exhibition only to gather experience. He was fascinated by the variety and colour and size of the roses he saw there. He made enquiries and returned home wiser and determined to win the prize the next time.

And so began a year of intense devotion, eager expectancy, hard work. The result of his labours began to affect the whole personality of Master Chamanlal. Gone was his brusque manner, his rage, his violent eruptions of temper. He was tender and gentle. He loved his flowers, his pupils and kids. His wife marvelled at the love he bestowed upon the growing roses. His children loved being with their father tending the gradually growing roses. He would hasten home to put the pots in the shade, to soften the soil round the stem. He would nurse them ever gently, attend to them. He was all in rapture.

January was in progress. The roses of Master Chamanlal were now reaching their youth. Their beauty began to acquire dazzling qualities. The date for the exhibition in February had been announced. The aching joy of Master Chamanlal was almost unbearable. It was impossible to wait. He would stand beside the flower pots enraptured by the magnificence of his roses. The sheer aesthetic pleasure of the

exhibition. He has painted the pots afresh. He has pruned the plants finally. He wants to take leave from the school today and sit guarding his treasure. It is difficult enough to rear beauty, but it is far more difficult to protect beauty in full bloom. And yet, how can you sit all the time by side of beauty and not swoon away with its sweet charm? And he could not go away either. In the morning he had a terrible dream. The vehicle he was going in had met with an accident. The flower pots had been broken into pieces. The flower had been trampled under the wheels. He had jumped out of his bed with a lump in his throat. His right eye was twitching an ill omen: oh, no, it's just the agitation of a loving heart. As an educated person he had to learn to have better control over his emotions. All is well. He must go to school. It is only half day today. He asked his wife to take care, took his bicycle and left for his school.

It was no use going to the school. He could hardly concentrate. His soul was trembling. He almost felt giddy and choked with his anxiety. When the bell for recess was rung, he rushed for his cycle and rode hard home, and did not even wait for his son to join him. The main gate of his house was wide open. His heart missed a beat. The moment he entered, ruin confronted him. The teen aged son of the Khannas, his next door neighbours, was plucking the flowers. The plucked plants looked like maidens raped and left in naked agony. Master Chamanlal dashed his cycle to the ground and sprang at the boy. He clutched him from the collar and literally dragged him into his room. His eyes were bloody. He was now the brutal master. A devil had overpowered him. The boy began to shriek. He hit him, kicked him, thrashed him with the ruler. Hearing the help less cries of the child, Rampiari, his wife, rushed to the room. The mother of the boy heard his cries and came running, breathless. The woman raised a hue and cry. The boy had lost his senses. Master Chamanlal sat down exhausted.

Someone ran for the doctor. The father of the boy was summoned. "Call the police. Beat this brute to death." Mr. Khanna was anxious about his son. The doctor reassured him. It was two hours before the boy could regain his senses. Mr. Khanna spoke to the other

neighbours. They decided to project the police and take the matter to the block committee.

Late in the evening the block committee met at the house of Santa Singh a transporter. They all condemned Master Chamanlal and decided to summon him. Master Chamanlal came and told the tale of his agony. But it seemed to have no effect. Mr. Kohli, the manager of the school where Master Chamanlal was employed said that even though the boy was to blame, the master should have acted like a mature, educated person. "The master has been unduly harsh, out of proportion to the fault of the boy. Thank God he has escaped lasting damage," said Mr. Manchanda.

"Mr. Khanna is very generous. Else you should be in police custody. You should have complained to Mr. Khanna. He would have gladly paid you for the loss. If you have to live in society, you have to learn to conduct yourself according to its norms," continued Santa Singh. "My driver told me the other day that a Jat boy played around with a Harijan girl. The village panchayat re-established harmony by fining the boy Rs. 15/- and giving the money to the girl's father. This is how it should be."

"Exactly, or how else can business be run? If we start fighting and killing for such losses, everything will stand still," said Mr. Manchanda.

"But how can you compensate me for the flowers I meant to take to the exhibition?"

"Flowers are not pearls. They will grow again. Why this fuss?" asked Mr. Manchanda.

"But they are to be taken to the exhibition tomorrow."

"So what? You could take my flower pots there, couldn't you?" said Santa Singh.

The committee ordered Master Chamanlal to apologize to Mr. Khanna or he would be ostracized. "Do you agree?" asked Santa Singh the transporter.

Master Chamanlal felt a surging rage inside him. He stood still. Perhaps he was finding words of apology. Suddenly he burst out:

"Do what you will. I don't give a damn."

He came back. He spent a sleepless night. Sunday came. Master Chamanlal dressed himself. He went out.

The real estate agent was glad to receive him.



different colours. Master Chamanlal thought of participating in this competition although there was not enough time to prepare. He bought a dozen large size flower pots, filled them with good soil, added the necessary fertilizers, found good quality rose saplings and planted them. It being the rainy season the sprouting was rich and encouraging. But it would take

fullness of their bloom often transported him. Never before had he felt so uplifted, so carried away with joy. He experienced the fullness of bliss like that of a mother whose dear daughter is soon expected to find the joy of love and recognition.

It is Saturday. Tomorrow is the exhibition. Master Chamanlal has already selected the flower pots he will carry to



# Drought, Relief and Women's Plight

One of the worst droughts in this century prevailing in many parts of the country is by now well known. Both the Central government and the state governments have launched a number of schemes and projects to provide relief to the victims. Various types of assistance and helps have been provided.

Deliberations of various committees at different levels over the past few weeks have evolved elaborate and multi-pronged strategy to face the situation.

But how these schemes and strategies are being implemented and by whom? What is the role of middlemen in distribution of relief assistance? It seems much is under cover in this regard. Recently some disturbing reports have been appearing in the press.

According to one report in Times of India Members of the National Commission of Self Employed Women who have been touring the country for their report have horrendous stories to tell of drought, the manner in which the thekedaras are depriving women of the famine relief doles and the villagers' unending search for water.

The most heart rending stories are from Rajasthan and Gujarat. In Kharikhurg village of Jodhpur district there is acute shortage of drinking water and even in July, when the commission visited the village, one could see the slow march of the sand dunes into the village.

Mrs. Mrinal Pande, a member of the commission, said the village had just two wells—one for the Harijans and the other for the upper castes. The Harijan well had just two inches of water and in the other the water had sunk 50 feet deeper. There was a layer of filth in the Harijan well and the women used their "odnis" to filter the water into earthen pots.

The village pradhan enforced strict rationing of water from both wells so that they are not drained bone dry by the thirsty villagers. No one is allowed to draw water from the wells between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m.

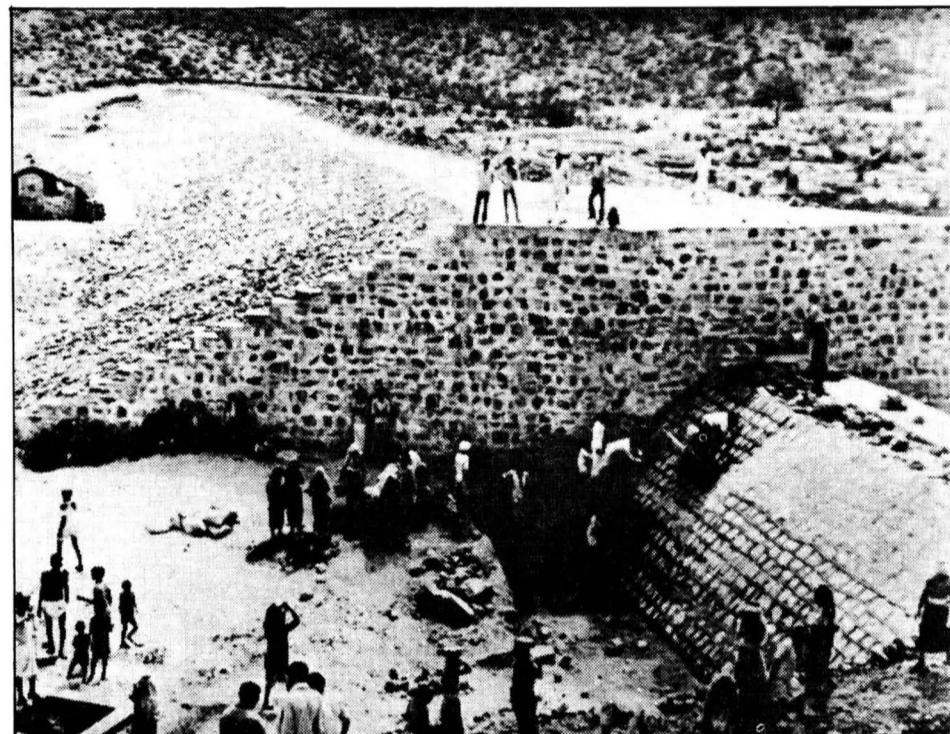
## THIRD YEAR

It was the village's third consecutive year of drought and many of the women reported to the commission that they had not had a bath in three years. Water is too precious a commodity to be wasted in bathing and washing. When the

5 a day. Jhanurbai, a villager, said the villagers got steady employment as daily wagers only for four months a year. The other eight months they ran from pillar to post in search of work. From the Rs. 5 earned a day the villagers bought fodder for the cattle and food for the

quota of wheat was just 100 kgs. Ironically enough the women kept asking commission members for "famine" or famine relief.

At Mada village of Dongarpur, Rajasthan, wheat is sold at Rs. 2 a kg. But when the women tried to sell to the



Employment Schemes, Digging of earth in Jabalpur district

children defecate they are wiped with sand. Every child had flurosis and women and children had skin eruptions.

Twenty kilometres from Kharikhurg, in Manaklavl village which sells chillies worth Rs. 2 crores annually, the commission members met agricultural labourers who worked from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. for just Rs. 4 to Rs.

children and themselves.

Those engaged in famine relief work in the village said they received only 4 kgs of wheat as famine relief instead of the seven sanctioned by the government. Women who tried to fight for their full entitlement were told sternly "take what you can get or you can find work elsewhere". Though the muster roll showed 60 women were employed in famine relief work, in reality there were just 40. For months the villagers have not eaten vegetables—their staple diet has been reduced to chappatis and buttermilk. The cooking is done on dry twigs collected through the day.

shopkeepers the wheat they had received as famine relief they got only Rs. 1.25 to Rs. 1.50 a kg.

In Pali district of Rajasthan women are engaged in loading sulphur on trucks for a meagre Rs. 10 a day. The women are doing the work though there is lurking suspicion that the work they are doing is responsible for sterility. It was not famine relief work and members of the commission could not find out who the employers were. But of

## TREES CUT DOWN

At Barapal village of Udaipur district where 100 people are engaged in famine relief work, the villagers were able to link the drought for the third consecutive year to the disappearance of forests. Till five years ago the village had a few clumps of bamboo and trees like the kher, dawda and ratanjot from whose berries soap is made. In the three years of drought the trees were cut and sold.

In this district the women were getting Rs. 10 a day or 6 kgs of wheat for famine relief work. Most of them opted for the wheat. Here again the villagers have been duped for, though they are supposed to get 6 kg. a day their monthly

the 15 women employed in the work just one had a child.

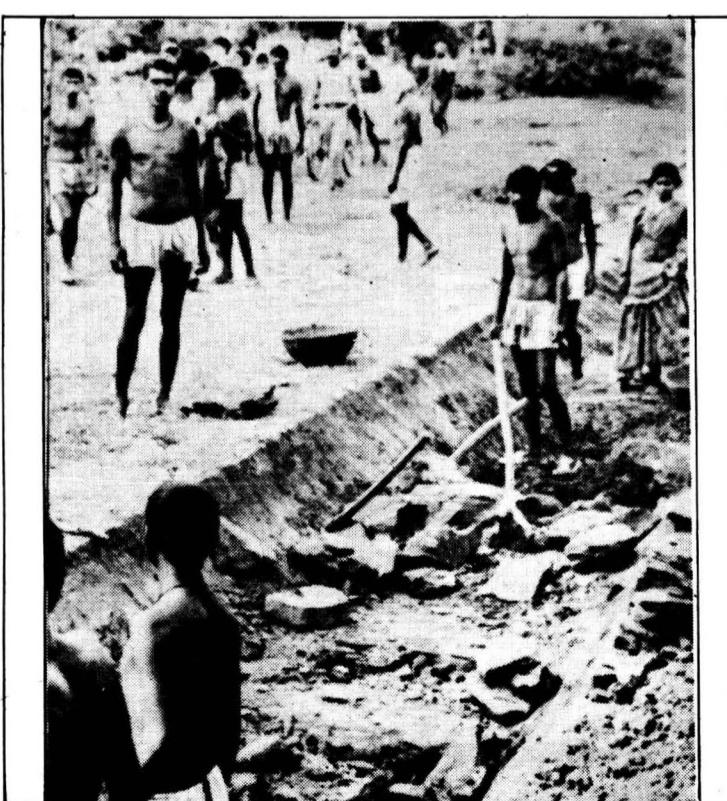
From the Sami taluka of Mehsana district of Gujarat, facing drought for the eighth year, men and women have moved to Kandla port in search of work. Bare footed and with no protection for their hands they load scrap iron on trucks. About 25 people are employed to load one truck and each gets Rs. 2 per truck loaded. In a day they load five trucks and earn Rs. 10

The 500 families of Kalidungri, also in Mehsana taluka, have virtually chopped off their centuries-old source of livelihood by releasing their cattle into the jungles near Samdaji. The village had only one handpump and the villagers had to walk a mile every day for water for themselves and their cattle. The ritual of bathing was reduced to once in eight or 10 days despite the intense heat and dust. The daily battle for water and fodder for the cattle became oppressive. Last month they fed sweet chappatis to their cattle, applied tilak on their foreheads and released them into the jungle. The villagers refused to sell their animals for slaughter.

The villagers have now moved to Kherwada where they are engaged in famine relief work for a kilo of corn and Rs. 7 a day. The wages are paid once in 15 days.

In Nahan district of Himachal Pradesh, the finest ginger growing area, the crop has been destroyed and women walk four hours a day to get water.

An anganwadi worker of Kamro village, Himachal, traces the drought to the cutting of forests in the area and says "give us cattle only when we regrow our forest and can get fodder for them."



Digging of earth in Bikaner district



Construction work in Jaipur district

**Book Review**

**Informative Book**

**"This British policy of divide and rule seems to have been incorporated in the political style of Indian ruling classes. In their struggle for retaining power, they can and do adopt any strategy to divide people to serve their interests. Language, region, caste, tribe etc. become formidable weapon in their hands to disunite the people. The problems are created by them, resolved and re-created by them. This is exactly what has happened in the case of Punjab situation."**

**Gopal Singh**  
**Punjab Today**  
**Intellectual Publishing**  
**House, New Delhi 1987**  
**p. 397 Rs. 300**

Like any general collection of essays on a particular theme this book is rather difficult to review. These 20 essays represent the proceedings of a Seminar on Punjab Today organised by the Department of Political Science, Himachal Pradesh University, SIMLA. The Seminar took place in March 1986 by when the Akali government, led by Barnala, had been in office for almost half a year. Naturally, it took quite some months to edit the essays and have the book published. In all such books there is always a time lag between what one writes and when that writing becomes available in the form of a book. Nevertheless, it is an exceedingly useful and facted book. Seldom has the issue been explored in such depth and from such a variety of angles.

The book is divided into four sections. Section I deals with some economic dimensions of the Punjab problem and section II deals with some aspects of communal politics. Section III analysis the electoral scene during the earlier elections as also the 1985 election. The last section deals with politics around the Accord and has two interesting essays on the Punjab Accord and Haryana and 'Haryana: Territorial and River Water Claims'. At the end of the book three documents are given: one gives the text of the Rajiv-Longowal Accord, the second gives the declaration of the Panthic Committee declaring Khalistan and the third contains the Seminar's resolution on the Punjab situation. As should be evident, it is a fairly comprehensive book.

Those who would find fault with things not being upto date are demanding from a book what the book cannot give. For that purpose it is best to refer to newspapers and to weeklies. This book has a much wider focus and, from one point of view, the heart of the book lies in Section I. It is always difficult to choose when there are several good essays approaching the theme from different points of view but the one which needs to be focussed on is by Javeed Alam who discusses the "Political Implications of Economic

Contradictions in Punjab." The heart of the argument advanced by Alam is in the following statement by him.

"From the mid-sixties, after the creation of the punjabi suba, to early seventies, the problem in Punjab was *non-specific* in one fundamental sense. It was *more* a demand for greater autonomy to states like in Tamil Nadu or West

Bengal or as it is now in Andhra Pradesh. But in this, as an aside, the way the Akalis posed the problem, there was a communal current which links up with the way the different Akali factions are contending now. The distinct shift in its character occurs from around the late 1970s and early 1980s. Its *specificity* now lies in the slow merging of State Autonomy demands for Punjab with the aggravation of the crisis of Sikh identity and the manifestation of these in the shape of a distorted nationality consciousness, based on chaotic communalism and extreme sectarian violence."

The rest of the article is devoted to an exposition of this hypothesis in course of which is elaborated and several insightful remarks made. Two of those may be recalled here.

One refers to the wide repercussion of the Punjab crisis across the country: "especially those of creating fears and apprehensions, insecurity and neurotic militancy among the Hindus," and the second one, more or less flowing out of it is, that the "Punjab issue requires to be seen not in isolation but in its implication for the way it has helped the ruling classes to re-structure power in the entire country as well as its international dimensions which benefit imperialism." The other three essays by Nirmal Singh Azad, Komarsh Chakravarty and Sucha Singh Gill provide valuable support to the basic hypothesis advanced by Alam.

The second section of the book has more variety and perhaps, because of that hardly any consensus. There are valuable studies by M S Dhami, K R Bombwall, Pritam Singh, Gurubhagat Singh, Harish K Puri, Satya Pal Dang and so on. Each one of them has a different point of view to advance and it is difficult to say what emerges from this variety of approaches.

The four essays on the Electoral Scene provide valuable data especially those by M.S. Dhami and A.S. Narang. But once again there is very little definitiveness about what is stated here.

Section IV is interesting because the perceptions advanced by D. R. Chowdhary were more or less subsequently

confirmed by the election in that state. Seen from that point of view the article is no longer a peek into the future but a prognostication of the future.

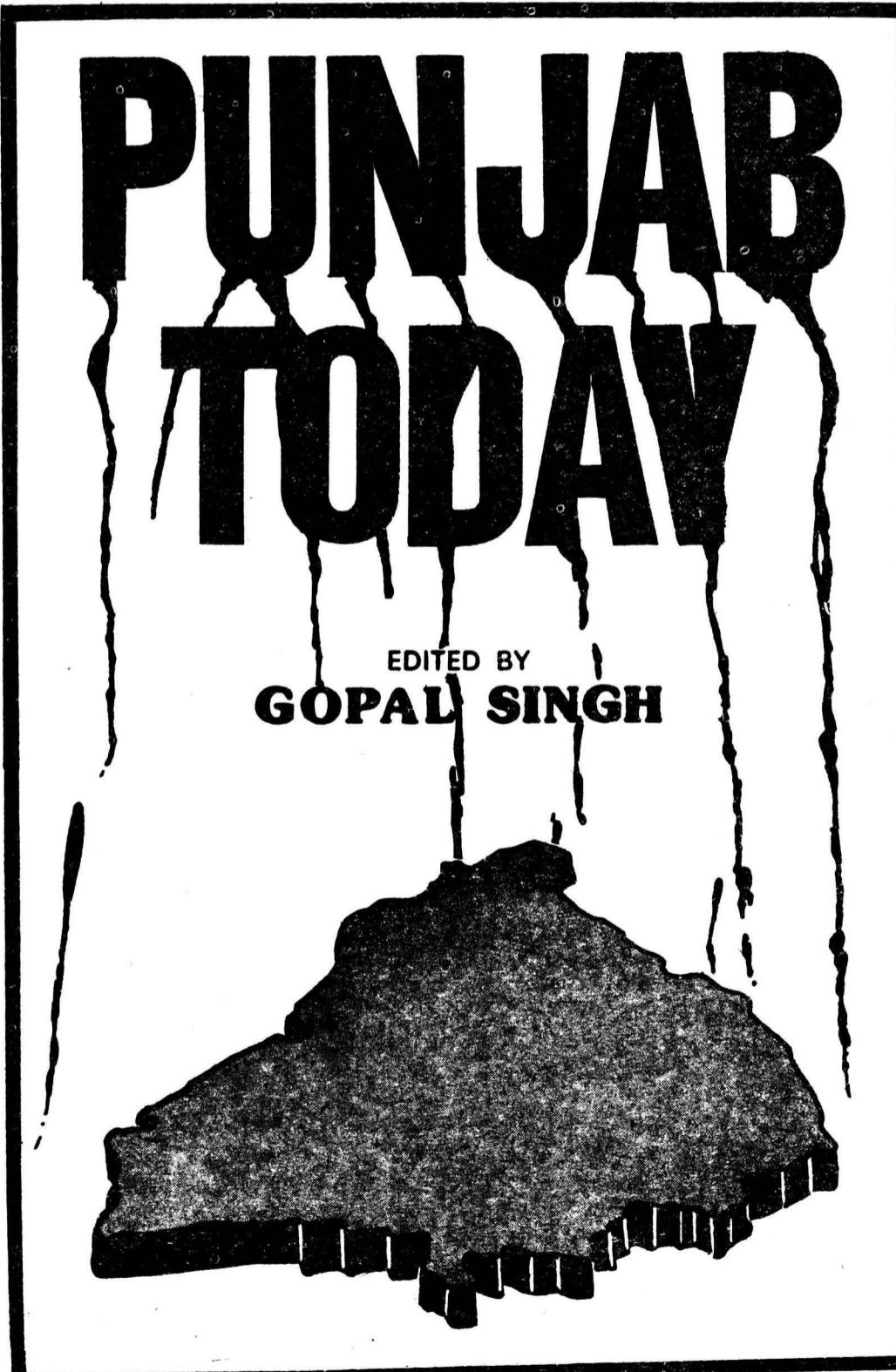
Having referred to these sections however one must also refer to the Introduction entitled 'Locating the Problem'. Gopal Singh gives a conspectus of the whole situation in a masterly fashion. His characterisation of the policies of the ruling party is forthright, as should be evident from this remark of his.

"This British policy of divide and rule seems to have been incorporated in the political style of Indian ruling classes. In their struggle for retaining power, they can and do adopt any strategy to divide people to serve their interests. Language, region, religion, caste, tribe etc. become formidable weapon in their hands to disunite the people. The problems are created by them, resolved and re-created by them. This is exactly what has happened in the case of Punjab situation.

For the rest, his analysis shares the same kind of Marxist bias as that of Alam except that he differs with Alam in one important respect. According to Gopal Singh, the historical past of the Sikhs has a good deal to do with the current situation. This is where he differs sharply from Alam and in my opinion, rightly so.

Altogether it is one of the better informed books on the subject; with different points of view presented by each author, it is difficult to say which is the thrust of the editor. This is for the simple reason that there is no one author. Everyone is responsible for his own opinion. Any one however who wishes to know what is happening in Punjab this book is a valuable source of information and a flood of insights.

—Amrik Singh



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# Why the Land and the People Remain Thirsty-I

Bharat Dogra

When a drought situation arises, the failure of our irrigation and drinking water schemes to give the expected benefits becomes all the more apparent and difficult to tolerate. In a country of such great diversities such as ours, the reasons and manifestations of this vary from area to area, only a limited effort is made here to bring out this failure in the context of one region, the Patha area of Banda district, the state of Uttar Pradesh. The first part of the article is about irrigation schemes and the second part is about drinking water schemes. In this area big investments in irrigation and drinking water schemes have been made.

Whenever drought or drinking water shortage are discussed in the context of Uttar Pradesh, the Patha area of Uttar Pradesh is difficult to ignore. In this rocky area spread over parts of Banda and Allahabad districts wells are difficult to dig and at several places water cannot be reached even at great depths. However, the area has several rivulets, and various approaches to utilising their water for irrigation have been tried.

One approach has been to construct large irrigation dams, such as those at Maro, Panhai and Bardaha. Visiting the Maro and Bardaha dams on Aug. 12, I could see that there was very little water available for irrigation and, as villagers from nearby areas said, the past benefits of irrigation had also been very meagre.

Bardaha dam is an earthen dam 2.8 kms long. It is with a maximum height of 14 meters. Its construction is supposed to have been completed in 1983 but in 1987 we could see that still a lot of 'pitching work' (or stabilising the earthen slopes with rocks) had been left unfinished. A rod of a sluice gate was damaged. Some villagers living nearby have complained that they feel threatened due to the incomplete construction work.

## The Beneficiaries

But the most shocking complaint that we heard was that so far this massive structure is helpful in irrigating the crop of just three landowners, one of whom is a police official, the most significant beneficiary of this dams, is a big landowner cum contractor who controls nearly 300 acres of land. The crop

several poor tribal families which around the canals of this project could also have been irrigated has not been able to get this benefit probably because the channels, have not been provided or probably, because the influential landowners do not want to give them a share of the limited water available. At the most they have been able to get some water to provide some moisture to the parched land, not actually to irrigate the crops.

It is a strange sight to see the fields of poor farmers just near this massive structure remaining barren because of the lack of water. The long earthen wall stretching as far as the eye can see creates a very deceptive appearance of an achievement in this drought-prone area, a deception which was easily cleared by climbing the wall to look at the meagre water supplies on the other side, the empty canals and the parched fields of farmers.

In Nadvania village, where a canal had been dug to bring the water from this dam, the people are now convinced that this will not bring them any water, their crop has been ruined almost entirely.

## Alarming Information

On making inquiries near the dam-site we also got several other alarming information. Most of the land now being irrigated by this dam was illegally grabbed in the name of starting cooperatives for the poor. The land around the dam which is given for seasonal cultivation on 5 year leases is being given to the well-to-do people ignoring the claims of the poor. Not only this but the influential people are also trying to corner the unclaimed land which has become more valuable on account of possibility of irrigation from this dam (this is happening in Kibunia gaon sabha). The people living in the submergence area had offered a lot of resistance to their eviction but had to move eventually.

Maro dam, near Dadri Mavaan village, is a much older structure of this, having been constructed about two decades back. Here too the realised irrigation has been much below the expectation. A big problem here has been massive seepage to prevent which several steps have been taken from time to time the truces of which can be seen. However, there are allegations of large-scale corruption in these seepage-prevention efforts.

I could not visit two other large dams of this area Panchi and Rampur-but here too the seepage problem is said to be acute.

In Orncha Dih village canals to take water from Panhai dam have been dug but the 5 metre gap between canal and dam has been left unfilled. Both in Rampur and Panhai, specially in the latter project, the irrigation achievement has been very meagre. Disillusionment with these large dams had led to the demand for smaller check

dams on the rivulets to provide relatively small-scale irrigation to the surrounding fields. A series of such low-budget, short-gestation projects, it was hoped would start providing immediate relief to the parched land and its hard-pressed cultivators. To the credit of the government it must be said that it has responded to such suggestions in a big way and during the past two years or so there has been a spate of check dam projects. According to one estimate over two dozen such projects have been taken up in Manikpur block alone to utilise the potential of the numerous rivulets which flow here.

## Neglect

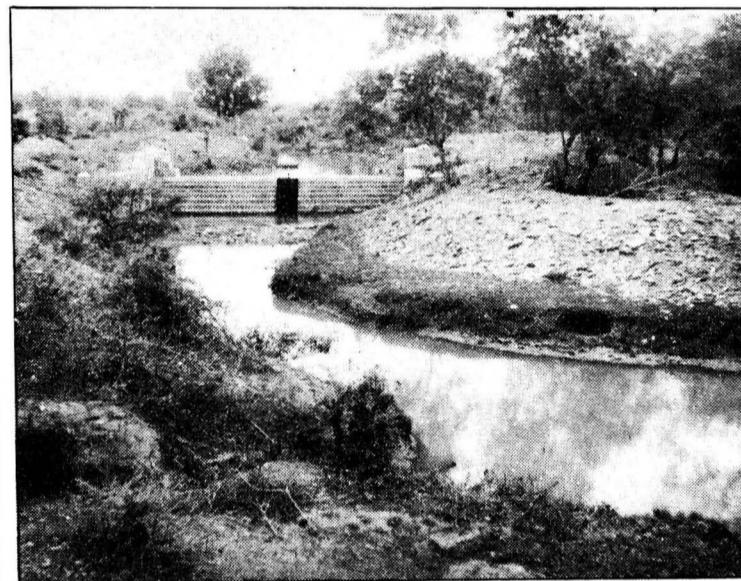
The first check dam I saw was near Behala village, near Kalwalia Nalla. Here there was no indication of the dam having been used for irrigation during the last 2 years of its existence. Silt deposits were accumulating. The dam

the earthwork had been left incomplete and the construction work was making it difficult for water to reach the fields.

At Baraha check dam the construction was certainly much better. But here it appeared that the irrigation benefits will go mainly to the land of the contractor or a few persons close to him. This is one of a series of check dams on Bardaha river. Near Chiraha Bujurg village I saw a different type of project a check well. In such project the flow of a rivulet is checked by small dam, and this water then finds its way to a well dug just nearby. This particular check-well has not provided any irrigation to crops in fact it is not suitably located for this. However, after the well water became available a forest nursery was started here which is able to use this water.

## Negligible Benefits

A survey by a local social worker and journalist Hazari Singh for which



A check dam

was in a state of neglect and isolation, as if merely the construction and the related financial transactions were the only aim.

The construction work at Gobbarai check dam on Jurnavia river was much better and it appeared to be quite a project, with adequate water and a lot of potential for irrigation. The Pradhan of Nihin river, Rama Shankar said that fields of 30 to 40 families can be irrigated for which, however, pump sets and pipes would be required.

Rama Shankar is also the contractor who built this check dam. It remains to be seen when the objective of irrigating the land of 30 to 40 farmers including small farmers is fulfilled. For the time being the location of the check dam appears to be most appropriate for irrigating the large land holding of the contractor-cum-pradhan and a few other well-to-do villagers. On the other side in Charaiya village where the terror of big landowners is such that even officials are afraid to go there for giving land-pattas to the poor.

At Mahariya check dam site I learnt that the dam was completed over a year back but it has not provided any irrigation so far. An experienced person said that

he has covered a long distance on foot-has revealed similar trends. He has noticed several dams which are not giving the intended irrigation benefits or giving negligible benefits. These are Kekramar check dam, Sudva check dam, Devkura check dam (on Bardaha rivulet), check wells on Gendha nullah near Chiraha Khurd village. He found several other check dams incomplete and neglected.

It appears that those check dams which will irrigate the land of contractors-cum-landowners who got the contracts for building them (amounting to Rs. 3 to 5 lakh rupees) have been built properly in most other dams the work has been done in a half-hearted manner. Villagers tell strange stories of how the contractors used to carry liquor and chicken for an engineer when going to meet him in a rest house. The name of one A.E. (Assistant Engineer) Jaat is mentioned in this context. Corruption money was collected and check dams contracts were sanctioned. From some contractors advance was taken but no contract given, meanwhile Mr. Jaat was transferred. These people are waiting for him as he has said that he will be transferred back to this district in a senior position. There is a particular tea-stall where the contractors and would-be contractors gather to discuss the return of A.E. Jaat.

Meanwhile the small and marginal farmers in whose names most of the projects were sanctioned remain as exposed to the vagaries of drought as ever before (to be continued)



# Women And Nation Building

Continued from page 2



development of her personality with which she could contribute to the development of society.

## Organisational Problems

In western countries women have organised themselves. There is a realisation in the west that she has not given her due she deserved. There has been a spate of feminist militant movements, euphemistically called as 'Women's Lib' movements. Unfortunately sometimes these movements are unable to realise the real causes of the oppression of women. Therefore these movements become movements against men rather than against the system. Since their target is misplaced, the movements have either generated ridicule or indifference. In fact women cannot achieve their aim without attacking the system which deprives them of their rightful place in society. Women cannot ask for reservation of jobs for themselves, they would have to fight for a total restructuring of society which provides jobs for both men and women. She had to fight for a society where men and women will be equal partners and not subordinate to each other.

In our country women's movement has to identify the forces of oppression. They have to analyse the causes of oppression. Dahez, bride burning, Purdah, Prostitution, Polygamy and maltreatment to female child above all the dependence of women on men are symptoms of the deep rooted malady. Our fight should not end up fighting only.

## Human Issues

Women's issues are, nevertheless not exclusively women's issues. They are human issues and very intricately conjoined with socio-economic structures.

Women constitute the half of humanity? They should be in equal number in schools, colleges, jobs, parliaments, assemblies and other spheres of life. But what is the present situation? The concept of equality remains a theoretical proposition in real terms. Women can contribute to the nation building only if they achieve equality in real terms, and this equality could be achieved only if the society is structured in such a way which provides equal opportunities to all its citizens. A woman is an equal citizen of the nation. She is not only a mother, sister or wife, she also could be a politician, scientist, doctor, economist, factory worker, artist and what not?

The women can play indeed a significant role in Nation Building and for this we have to bear in mind that:

1. The most important factor would be providing equal opportunities to her. For this, she has to be economically independent. This economic independence could be achieved only in a society where unemployment has been totally eradicated. There should be equal opportunities of education.
2. Ignorance is the biggest curse women suffer from. There should be legal, social and cultural fight against religious obscurantism which is a debilitating institution which comes in

3. the way of women's freedom.
4. There should be struggle against the system which makes women an object of lust, a saleable commodity. Neither she is a cog in wheel of the blind forces of production.
4. She is a human being and has her own personality.



Letters

# What about 1984?

Sir,

In November 1984, according to government figures, three thousand innocent Sikhs (citizens of India) were murdered in the capital of the country, and an unspecified number were done to death in some other Congress ruled states. The bestiality and gruesomeness of the killing surpassed what was witnessed in 1947. The government, for several months, refused to hold an inquiry, and, when pressurised, staged the farce of the Mishra Commission, whose findings are an all time slur on the judiciary. A few eminent citizens, unconnected with any political party, (God bless this tribe), as a result of an independent inquiry nailed the lie that the carnage was a spontaneous uprising over Mrs. Gandhi's assassination.

Enough evidence was adduced to prove that it was organised by the ruling party. Rajiv Gandhi's electioneering campaign of 1984 was blatantly communal. With the total control of the electronic media, and to an extent of the print media, he managed to convince the majority community into thinking that the Sikhs are hell bent on breaking the country, and it could be saved only if the Congress (I) was returned to power. The nation was divided into 'We' and 'They': the good

guys and the bad guys, and was given a dose of what Aldous Huxley used to call 'herd poisoning'. Since then most of the media men and opinion maker have been talking the language of the Cold War. Rarely do we see an attempt at objective or cool headed thinking.

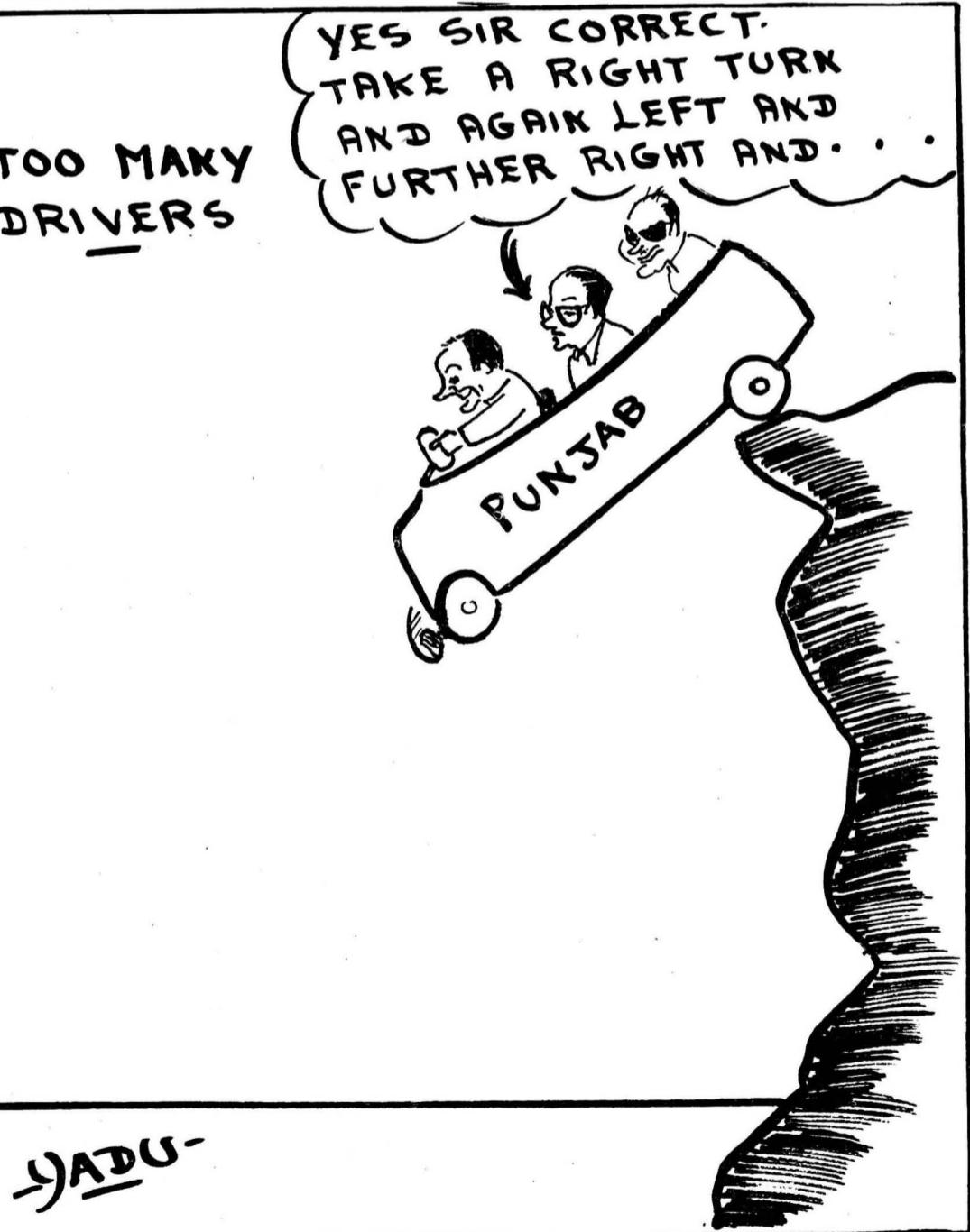
If the upholders of the Constitution of India, (the reciters of the mantra of unity and integrity of the country) bother to read the preamble to the Constitution they would find the following noble words: 'We the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, secular democratic republic, and to secure to ALL its citizens: JUSTICE, EQUALITY, LIBERTY', and so on. Does it not occur to these gentlemen, that if you violate the very postulates, viz, justice, equality and rule of law on which the nation state is founded, you inevitably undermine the foundation of the state? By not punishing the guilty of 1984 the state has inflicted an injury on itself.

One is constrained to note that even the efforts of the Forum Gazette to secure justice for the aggrieved, have been rather half hearted.

Yours etc.

(Lt. Col. J.S. Bindra, Retd.)  
Chankya Puri New Delhi

## TOO MANY DRIVERS



## Elections in Pakistan

Continued from page 16

face, added, "But I must also say that the Pakistan Army will not be a silent and helpless spectator to the political leaders pushing the country once again to the verge of ruin."

So, what President Zia-ul-Haq said in effect was that while the Army would not be part of the government that would be elected in 1990, that is, a government run by elected representatives of the political parties, it would not abandon its traditional role of "coming to the rescue" of the nation if the politicians messed up the country's affairs once again. Perhaps in order to preserve that interventionist role that the Pakistan army did not wish to get integrated into the political process.

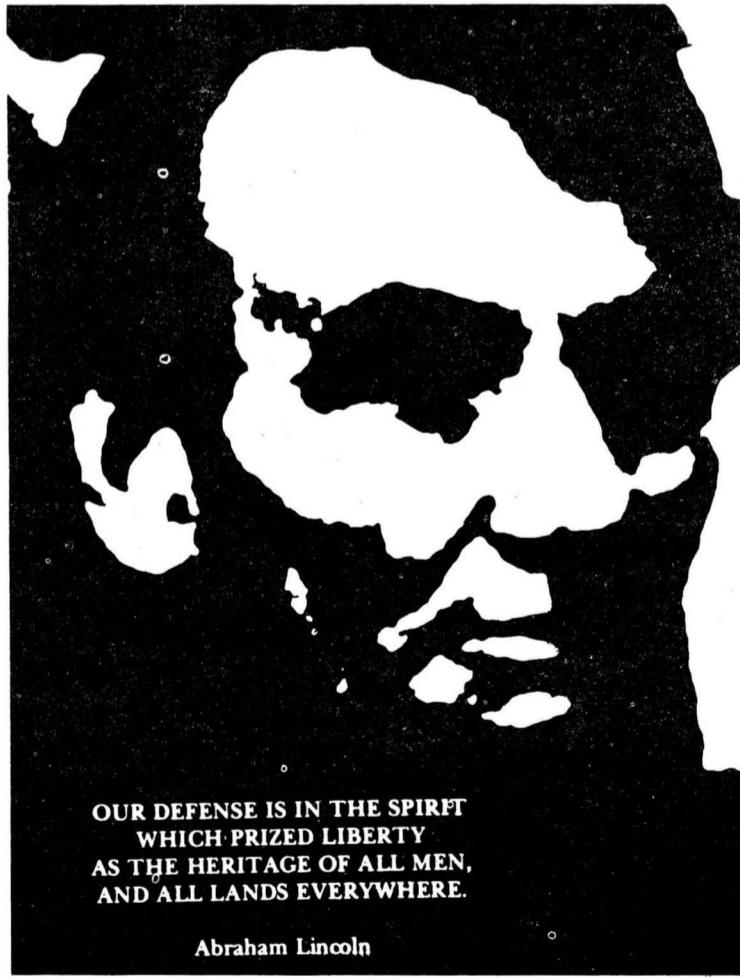
### State of Politics

In fact, General Zia spent quite a lot of time reflecting on the state of Pakistan's politics. Pakistan did not develop politically because it could not build strong and stable institutions of democracy, he observed. Predictably, he overlooked the fact that the Army too did not allow political institutions to grow in Pakistan. He wanted those who now wanted to give Pakistan a democratic government to address themselves first to the building of strong democratic institutions. There should be fewer political parties so that factionalism did not eat into the vitals of democracy. He visualised the introduction of the system of proportionate representation by consensus among the political parties. It was, he said, a more democratic system and it eliminated small contending parties and ensured that no party could obtain far more seats in parliament than were justified by the proportion of its electoral support. "I wish we had several more elections

before embarking on full-fledged party-based election", he mused. "But we have taken the decision and now Pakistan must prove itself equal to the challenging task of building a strong and stable democratic system." General Zia had many good things to say of the late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, whose fatal faults, he pointed out, were a proclivity for macho leadership and cruelty. He spoke about Benazir Bhutto in surprisingly soft, even affectionate terms, though he characterised her as "misguided" while also being "highly intelligent and with some mass appeal." However, General Zia did not believe that the PPP dominated the political scene in Pakistan. "It is one of several important parties," he said, "In Pakistan, as in India, the masses a political leader draws does not necessarily reflect his or her political or electoral support."

### The Future

In the course of the entire interview, General Zia impressed me as a man who had done his assignment and is now getting ready to hand over to others. He spoke with flashes of wisdom drawn from the cumulative fluids of success and failure, from mistakes made and right decisions and actions taken. He painted a great future for Pakistan only if it could live in peace, he stressed the overriding need for peace again and again. He also had high visions of the future of China and India. He showed a positive perception of Mikhail Gorbachev and appeared to be looking forward to better neighbourly relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union. He visualised a time when Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan would live in friendly cooperation as genuinely non-aligned nations.



## FRIENDS

### BUDDHISM

One should pick one's associates from among the wise and the good. Evil associates will corrupt a man. A man who reproves intelligently should be sought out since his words are the advice one needs.

### HINDUISM

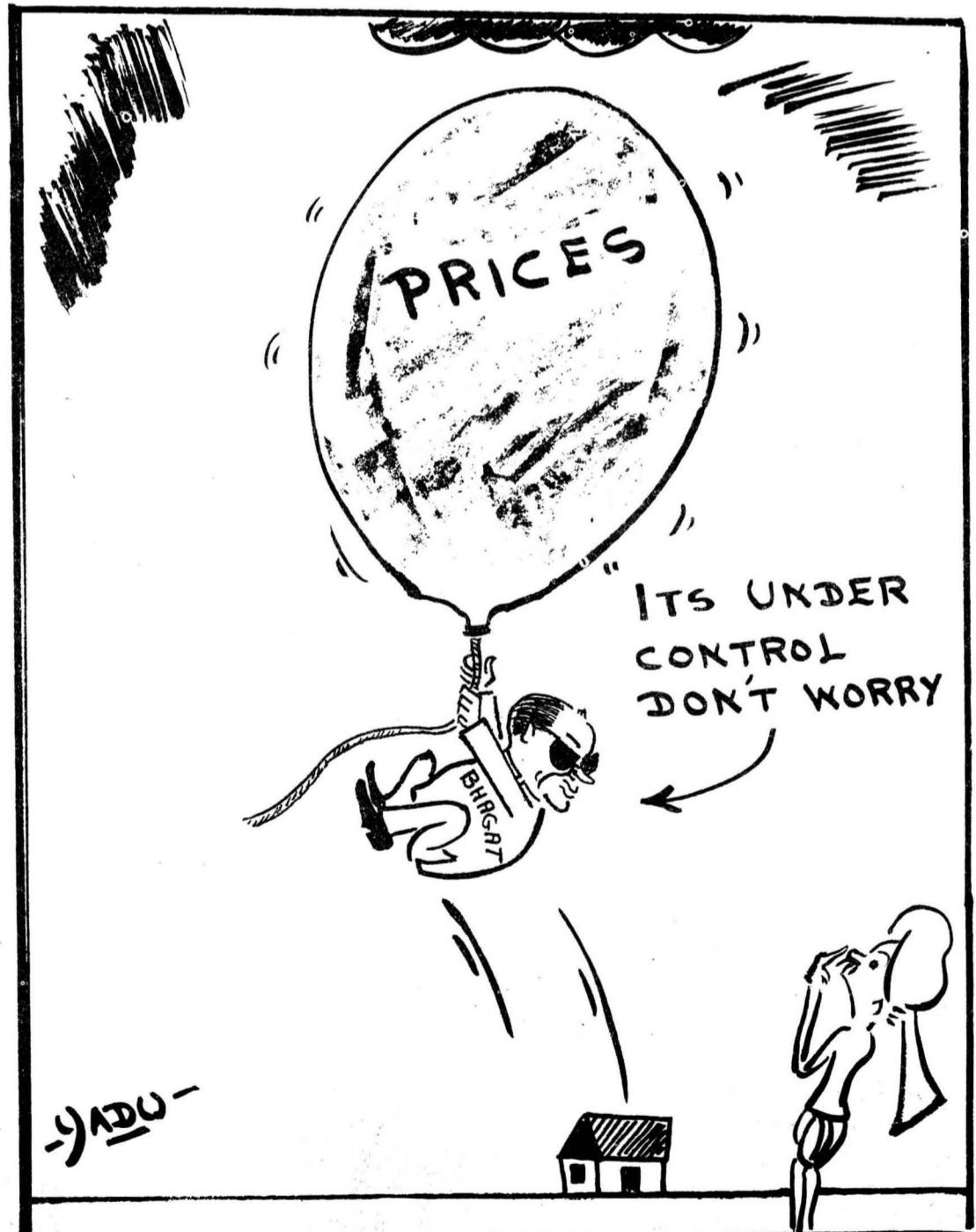
Look upon all the living beings as your bosom friends, for in all of them there resides one soul. All are but a part of that Universal Soul. A person who believes that all are his soul-mates and loves them all alike never feels lonely.

### SIKHISM

Friend, if you possess some good, let us be friends,  
Let us be partners for doing good,  
And let us ignore each other's flaws

### JUDAISM

Do not follow the path of the wicked, or associate with those who are evil. Good friends are best.



# Zia Says There'll be Party Based Elections in Pakistan in 1990

Bhabani Sen Gupta

Islamabad: "Absolutely" with this single definitive word, President Zia-ul Haq answered my question in Islamabad on September 3, whether he stood committed to democratic elections in Pakistan in 1990.

He said the next election would be on party basis. He expected the Pakistan People's Party to take part in the election. The PPP, he pointed out, was already meeting one of the two requirements of a party to qualify to contest elections; it was submitting to the Election Commissioner statements of party funds. The other requirement was to get registered as a political party.

I mentioned fears entertained in certain quarters that if the PPP applied for registration, it might be disqualified on one pretext or another. The President dismissed the idea. The law was passed by the elected national assembly, and not framed by the Martial Law Administration, he stressed. And he went on to add that he wanted the next election to be fully representative of the people of Pakistan.

It was five o'clock in the evening when President Zia-ul Haq received me in his modestly appointed office room at his residence, Army House, Rawalpindi, with his characteristic profusion of courtesy and geniality. He talked to me for 90 minutes in a most relaxed manner. He reflected with candour and openness on a wide range of issues concerning Pakistan, the regional and international situation in general, specific issues like Afghanistan and India-Pakistan relations, and on the global human condition on a broad canvas. The words that flowed from a reflective Zia-Ul-Haq showed that he had indeed grown in the ten years that he has been at the helm of

Pakistan's destiny.

#### Good VS Democratic

"**P**eople do not want good government. They want democratic government", he observed; it was a conclusion he had drawn from ten years of experience in governing a country like Pakistan, which is no easy job. He seemed to have come to the conclusion without rancour, without a sense of frustration or disappointment. "This government has done for the development of Pakistan, for improving the living conditions of the people of Pakistan more than any other previous government in a comparable period," he claimed. "But our people have become politically very conscious. Ask any ordinary Pakistani whether he wanted a government that gave him his essential needs and perhaps a little more or he wants a democratic government. He will say, 'a democratic government.' So I conclude the time has come when he must have his elected democratic government."

I asked the president what the role of the Army would be in a democratic set-up. Will the Army which has penetrated deep into the administrative process withdraw to the barracks and be satisfied with its original task which is to defend the borders of the country? Or will there be an attempt to integrate and Armed Forces into the political process?

#### Role of the Army

I mentioned several models that have been tried in the third world to institutionalise the army as an integral part of the political process—the Nasserite model, the Golkar model of Suharto, some Latin American and African models and now what president Ershad

was trying to do in Bangladesh. "Do the Pakistan armed forces have any such intentions?", I asked.

The president's reply was without ambiguity. "We have discussed and debated this question at great length", he disclosed. "We have examined each of the

models you have mentioned. Finally we have come to the conclusion that none of these models apply to Pakistan. It is not generally realised that the Pakistan Army—the Generals in particular—have no desire to rule the country. The Army had to take over when the politicians convincingly failed

to run the system. The Army has no intention to be an integral part of the political process. We shall be happy to return to our real job, which, as you said, was to defend the borders of the country."

Then, he took a long breath, and with a smile on his

Continued on page 15



President Zia-ul Haq

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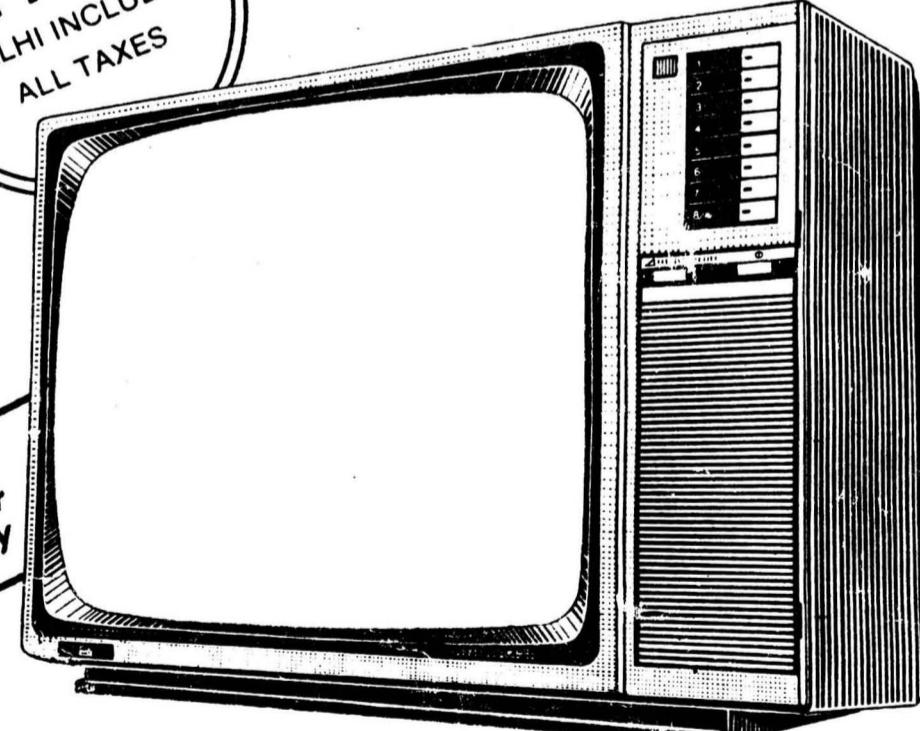
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